

The Travel Agents' Path to Profits

Incredible!ndia



- 18 EGYPT** Captivating & Affordable
- 22 DUBAI** Shifting Sands and Seas
- 24 HUNGARY** Budapest's Lively Arts
- 26 SPAIN** Barcelona's Fusion Culture
- 34 MEXICO** Hotel Chains Find Gold
- 40 ARUBA** Divi's Inside Edge

ROME REVISITED

5 Day Package from \$799*



*** All inclusive
Air & Land
Commissions Paid ***

November 9, 2008 – March 22, 2009

Includes:

- Roundtrip Airfare on Eurofly to Rome
- Fuel Surcharge
- 4 nights at selected hotel
- Daily Breakfast

Hotel Selection

Hotel Selection	From
GH Beverly Hills • 4 stars	\$ 799.00
Hotel Villa Torlonia • 4 stars	\$ 899.00
Hotel Savoy • 4 stars	\$ 999.00
Ambasciatori Palace • 5 stars	\$1,099.00

euroflyvacations.com

1.800.459.4980

*Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Rate includes \$280 fuel surcharge, but does not include US & Foreign taxes/fees up to \$75 including the Sept. 11th Security Fee. Package valid 11/9/08–3/22/09. Single Supplement, Business Class upgrade, and Extra Nights available. Other restrictions apply, please see website for details. Seats are limited. All fares and flight times are subject to change without notice. All flights are operated in code-share with Meridiana Airlines.



Eurofly is part of the Meridiana Group.

Over 15 Million Consolidator Net Fares Plus Non-Capped Commissions
for F, C & Y Class Published Fares Worldwide!

BRITISH AIRWAYS NET AIRFARE SALE TO ITALY



From NYC - JFK To:

Bari	BRI	\$265
Catania	CTA	\$265
Genoa	GOA	\$265
Naples	NAP	\$265
Pisa	PSA	\$265
Rome	ROM	\$265
Turin	TRN	\$265
Venice	VCE	\$265

**BA REDUCES
SECTOR FUEL
SURCHARGES PLUS
BA 5% COMMISSION
ON PUBLISHED
ECONOMY FARES**

Booking Class: N. Minimum Stay: Saturday Night. Maximum Stay: 12 Months or within GDS system date range, whichever comes first. StopOver: 1 Free Stop in UK and unlimited additional stops at USD \$50 each stop at any BA gateway. One-Ways: 65% of round-trip adult net (permitted eastbound only). Date Changes: Unlimited date changes in either direction at a transaction fee of USD \$150 per change. Child Discount: Child 2-11: Charge 80% of rt net fare. --Infant: Charge 10% of rt net fare. Seasonality: Low Season Dec 24 2008 ~ Mar 22, 2009

Other rules and restrictions may apply. BA Fares are available from other cities but will vary in price depending on the point of origin within the U.S. These are weekday "Net" airfares only and do not include any applicable taxes, security fees or fuel surcharges. All net airfares & commissions are subject to change without notice.

Dallas - HDQ 800-485-6828	Washington 202-296-8886	Virginia 703-354-9288	San Diego 858-614-0288	Minneapolis 612-872-4931
Houston 713-774-4946	Atlanta 770-457-8221	Seattle 206-381-9588	San Francisco 415-837-0490	Burlingame 650-344-9888
Austin 512-467-2702	Boston 617-350-6786	LAX/Wilshire 213-251-9936	San Jose 408-452-8880	NYC/Midtown 212-448-6907
Oklahoma City 405-842-2919	Chicago 312-782-6398	LAX/Alhambra 626-570-9009	Detroit 248-626-9181	NYC/Jackson Hts 718-505-8430

Call Our Group Desk at: 1-888-856-8835 or Email: gttgroups@gtttravel.com

Check our pricing online at: www.gttglobal.com & "Get A Login" Today!



EUROPE • ISRAEL • INDIA • PAKISTAN • MIDDLE EAST • AFRICA • S. E. ASIA • CHINA • JAPAN • S. PACIFIC ISLANDS

AUSTRALIA • NEW ZEALAND • MEXICO • CENTRAL AMERICA • SOUTH AMERICA • PUERTO RICO • CARIBBEAN

Over 15 Million Consolidator Net Fares Plus Non-Capped Commissions
for F, C & Y Class Published Fares Worldwide!

ASIA - ECONOMY & BUSINESS NET AIRFARE SALE!

WEEKDAY ROUND TRIP ECONOMY NET FARES

From	BJS	SHA	HKG	BKK	SEL	SIN	MNL
ANC	\$895	\$885	\$835	\$990	\$735	\$990	\$990
CHI	\$935	\$925	\$765	\$905	\$735	\$905	\$905
DFW	\$915	\$915	\$735	\$905	\$615	\$905	\$905
HNL	\$665	\$675	\$645	\$730	\$650	\$730	\$730
MSP	\$955	\$945	\$755	\$935	\$670	\$935	\$935
NYC	\$805	\$785	\$785	\$895	\$735	\$895	\$895
LAX	\$675	\$655	\$615	\$655	\$580	\$655	\$655

Midweek fares (X): Monday thru Thursday. Weekend fares (W): Friday through Sunday.
Min. Stay: 6 Days. Max. Stay: 6 Months. Change Fee: \$300. Cancellation Fee: \$300
Reservations must be made 7 days in advance. Other rules & restrictions may apply.

ROUND TRIP BUSINESS CLASS NET FARES

From	BJS	CAN	HKG	SEL	SHA	SIN	TPE
ANC	\$3060	\$3230	\$2930	\$2630	\$3130	\$3030	—
ATL	\$3060	\$3230	\$2930	\$2630	\$3150	\$3030	\$2500
CHI	\$3060	\$3230	\$3180	\$2630	\$3150	\$3030	\$2500
DFW	\$3060	\$3230	\$2930	\$2630	\$3150	\$3030	\$2500
MSP	\$3030	\$3230	\$2930	\$2630	\$3130	\$3030	\$2500
NYC	\$3060	\$3230	\$2930	\$2630	\$3150	\$3030	\$2500
LAX	\$2600	\$2550	\$2530	\$2180	\$2600	\$2430	\$2200

Does not include DTW and MSP as origins. Weekday: Fare Basis ZRX Mon-Thurs. Weekend:
Fare Basis ZRW Fri-Sun Weekend: Fare Basis ZRS Sat only. Max Stay: 1 year. Cancellations/
Changes: Change Fee \$400. Cancellation Fee \$400. Other rules & restrictions may apply.

The net fares do not include any applicable taxes, security fees or fuel surcharges.
The net fares are available from other cities but will vary in price depending on the
point of origin within the U.S. All net airfares are subject to change without notice.

Dallas - HDQ 800-485-6828	Washington 202-296-8886	Virginia 703-354-9288	San Diego 858-614-0288	Minneapolis 612-872-4931
Houston 713-774-4946	Atlanta 770-457-8221	Seattle 206-381-9588	San Francisco 415-837-0490	Burlingame 650-344-9888
Austin 512-467-2702	Boston 617-350-6786	LAX/Wilshire 213-251-9936	San Jose 408-452-8880	NYC/Midtown 212-448-6907
Oklahoma City 405-842-2919	Chicago 312-782-6398	LAX/Alhambra 626-570-9009	Detroit 248-626-9181	NYC/Jackson Hts 718-505-8430

Call Our Group Desk at: 1-888-856-8835 or Email: gttgroups@gtttravel.com



**SPECIAL ASIA
NON-CAPPED
PUBLISHED FARE
COMMISSIONS
STARTING AT
BUSINESS CLASS 15%
ECONOMY CLASS 13%**

AUSTRALIA • NEW ZEALAND • MEXICO • CENTRAL AMERICA • SOUTH AMERICA • PUERTO RICO • CARIBBEAN

Daily non-stop. New York, JFK to Doha.
Connect to over 80 destinations worldwide.



Enjoy every moment of
your journey onboard
with us. Make the most
of space and comfort.
Indulge in an amazing
choice of entertainment
and world class cuisine.
Fly via Doha and
connect to the world.
After all, we cover the
world with over
80 destinations.

World's 5-star airline. qatarairways.com



Check our pricing online at: www.gtglobal.com & "Get A Login" Today!



Tel: 1-877-777-2827



Sky Bird Travel & Tours

Your Global Partner

Thinking Great International Air Fares?

LOT Polish Cathay Pacific LAN Brussels Air
Aero Mexico Air France Kuwait Airways
Saudi Arabian
LTU Air India Etihad Royal Jordanian Aer Lingus
Eurofly Scandinavian Air Canada Malev Hungarian
British Midland Lufthansa Jet Airways Turkish
Singapore Mexicana Ethiopian
All Nippon Air New Zealand KLM Malaysia
Eva Air Finn Air Virgin Atlantic
Qatar United Alitalia Thai American
Aerosvit Tam Korean Air
China Airlines Northwest Gulf Air
SriLankan Airlines Emirates U.S. Airways
Austrian Qantas El Al Israel
Iceland Air Iberia South African
JAL Czech Swiss
Continental Delta

Think Skybird

CALL US! 1-888-SKY-BIRD • 1-888-759-2473 • Fax: 1-877-FAX-2SKY

Detroit (Headquarters) Fax: (313) 373-4810 E-mail: info@skybirdtravel.com	Chicago (Downtown) Fax: (312) 606-0905 E-mail: chicago@skybirdtravel.com	New York Fax: (212) 563-2056 E-mail: newyork@skybirdtravel.com	Fort Lauderdale Fax: (954) 467-5703 E-mail: fterida@skybirdtravel.com	Washington Fax: (703) 934-8157 E-mail: washington@skybirdtravel.com	Los Angeles Fax: (310) 647-5805 E-mail: la@skybirdtravel.com	San Francisco Fax: (650) 680-6681 E-mail: sf@skybirdtravel.com	Houston Fax: (713) 292-9801 E-mail: houston@skybirdtravel.com
--	---	---	--	--	---	---	--

Special discounts for group bookings!
Email to: groups@skybirdtravel.com



Customize Complex FIT's for Your Clients with

SOLAR TOURS



Samba - Tango Experience
8 nights from **\$1,769****



Rome - Florence - Venice
6 nights from **\$769****



Australia - Fiji - New
Zealand
10 nights from **\$2,119****

24/7 online quotes - Commission checks sent w/travel documents*
The easiest way for travel agencies to customize complex FIT's online

**Prices include international air, inter-city transfers, air per person/double, commissionable, and do not include air taxes and related surcharges. Prices will change according to your travel dates & other factors (priced for January - February 2009).

See these itineraries (and hundreds more) online: www.solartours.com



Solar Tours

SERVING TRAVEL AGENTS SINCE 1984

Air Consolidator & Tour Operator to Asia, Europe, Latin America

1-800-388-7652

9:00 AM - 8:30 PM EST



DESTINATION FEATURES AND ARTICLES

12 COVER FEATURE INDIA

Kochi: Calm, Complex and Compelling

To reach "Incredible India," I flew, non-stop about 8,000 miles in 16 hours. I soon learned that time and distance pale when it comes to falling in love with India, this land of miracles and vast horizons. It is hard to believe that India stretches from the tropics right up to the temperate regions, from near the equator to the coldest heart of Asia....

PUBLISHER'S CORNER

EDITOR'S DESK

SNAPSHOTS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

- 6 Selling Travel in Tough Economic Times
- 8 Trading Down, Not Out
- 11 The Month in Review
- 45 Roger Mahal, CEO & Chairman of Sita Tours

DESTINATION ARTICLES

18 EGYPT Captivating & Affordable

Egypt, the oldest tourist destination in the world has been attracting visitors from as far back as the ancient world to view fabulous monuments built to last for...



TRAVEL EGYPT

22 DUBAI Shifting Sands and Seas

24 U.S.A. Holidays Across the U.S.

26 HUNGARY Budapest's Lively Arts

Some say a visit to Budapest is love at first sight. Budapest is famous for its romantic bridges that span the Danube, such as Széchenyi Chain Bridge, the Independence...

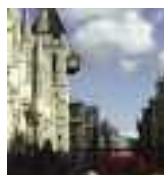


HUNGARY NTO

28 SPAIN Barcelona's Fusion Culture

29 MALTA's Historic Tempo

30 BRITAIN A Weekend in London



GB

34 MEXICO Hotel Chains Find Gold...Again!

Five hundred years ago Spanish Conquistadors came to Mexico seeking fortunes in gold. Today, Spanish hoteliers are repeating their ancestor's quest, with one slight twist; they are still seeking fortunes, but the gold...



MEXICO NTO

37 GUATEMALA Meet Me at the Fountain

38 BRAZIL Sensational Magic Moment

40 USVI Team Spirit Creates Savvy Deals

42 ARUBA Divi's Inside Edge on Inflation

44 BONAIRE Bon Bini - Diving and more

46 CRUISE Profiting from Shore Excursions

DIGITAL ONLINE EDITION

16e FRENCH POLYNESIA Gateway to Inner Peace

40e PUERTO RICO Star-Studded

Experience you can trust

GREECE

& the best of the Mediterranean

- The FIT experts for over 38 years
- Friendly, knowledgeable and personalized service
- Choose from over 26 outstanding and affordable tours, cruises and honeymoon packages
- Custom itineraries & group programs upon request
- Commission paid promptly

CROWN PETERS

34-10 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11106 • Reservations: (718) 931-7800 • (800) 321-1199 • E-mail: travel@crownpeters.com • www.crownpeters.com

You'll love Israel
from the first
"Shalom"



On the Tel Aviv beach near the ancient city of Jaffa.

Here's a sunny "Shalom" from Israel's first family of surfing. Armour Kanzapolski, shown here with two of his children on the beach at Tel Aviv, a city which celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2009. Behind them is the 4,000-year-old city of Jaffa. May be their "joie de vivre" is because more Americans came to Israel in 2007 than ever in our 60-year history. And in 2008 is up another 20%.

Here is some of what is in store for 2009:

- We'll be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Tel Aviv, and your clients are invited to join the party
- More new hotels will be opening - from major chains, to luxury boutique hotels, to country B&Bs
- In July US Airways will start daily non-stop service from Philadelphia. This is in addition to the eight daily non-stop flights on El Al, Continental and Delta.

ISRAEL
NO ONE BELONGS HERE MORE
THAN YOU.

www.goisrael.com/bestdeals
1-888-77-ISRAEL

DEPARTMENTS

ASIA & SOUTH PACIFIC	12
BEST BUYS • NEWS	17
AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST	18
NEWS • BEST BUYS	23
NORTH AMERICA & HAWAII	24
BEST BUYS • NEWS	25
EUROPE	26
NEWS • BEST BUYS	32, 33
CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA	34
NEWS • BEST BUYS	39
CARIBBEAN & BERMUDA	40
BEST BUYS • NEWS	41
MESSAGE BOARD	43
SPECIAL INTEREST	44
TOUR OPERATOR INTERVIEW	45
WORLDWIDE CRUISES	46
INDUSTRY NEWS	48
LISTINGS AND DIRECTORIES	49-88
LISTINGS BY DESTINATION	49
DIRECTORY OF SUPPLIERS	88
CALENDAR TRADE SHOW EVENTS	86
FAM TRIPS & STUDY PROGRAMS	87
MARKET PLACE DIRECTORY	87
FRONT COVER Photo credit: India NTO	

Download JAXFAX eMagazine at www.jaxfaxmagazine.com

This electronic version is a PDF file format and includes two additional features:

- French Polynesia Gateway to Inner Peace **Page 16e - 17e**
- Star-Studded Puerto Rico **Page 40e - 41e**

Click on any page numbers to get to the article. All Email and Website are live!

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 Execu-
 tives.; 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 month-
 ly 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 Market-
 ing 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

Explore BRASIL



24/7 online quotes - Commission checks sent w/travel documents*
 The easiest way for travel agencies to customize complex FIT's online

Beyond Rio:

8 nights from \$1,189 w/Air

Rio de Janeiro - Buzios

The Golden Route:

11 nights from \$2,465 w/Air

Rio de Janeiro - Paraty - Belo Horizonte - Duro Preto

The Best of Brazil:

12 nights from \$4,465 w/Air

Rio de Janeiro - Iguassu Falls - Manaus - Amazon - Salvador da Bahia

Samba - Tango Experience:

8 nights from \$1,769 w/Air

Rio de Janeiro - Iguassu Falls - Buenos Aires

*prices are per person/double, w/o taxes, and may change according to your travel dates. Prices listed are for travel in January 2009.



Solar Tours

SERVING TRAVEL AGENTS SINCE 1984

Air Consolidator & Tour Operator to Asia, Europe, Latin America

1-800-388-7652

9:00 AM - 8:30 PM EST

A toll-free guide to reach the world! Reach us. Reach the world.



BP :: 800-518-7781



MD :: 866-933-5963



QM :: 877-625-2942



UM :: 800-742-3006



KQ :: 866-536-9224



NX :: 866-606-2228



Q3 :: 877-592-6242



MK :: 800-537-1182



PG :: 866-226-4565



D3 :: 866-322-5561



GA :: 800-342-7832



8U :: 877-359-0999



Selling Travel in Tough Economic Times

Despite a \$700 billion economic bailout plan and a new President Elect, industry experts continue to forecast tough going for the travel industry well into 2009 and maybe beyond. Even in my own conversations with suppliers and agents alike I have been told that over the past month the phones have gone quiet. Part of this was attributed to the election but that has now come and gone, and still the phones are quiet. The news is still reporting on record unemployment, falling home values, and new stock market lows, foreclosures and bankruptcies. The bottom line is that consumers are scared. They are worried about their job security and paying their mortgage. Travel is a luxury that many people will feel they can live without.

So what are those of us who make their living in the travel industry supposed to do to weather this new storm? Many of us have been through tough times before and understand the economy is cyclical and that better days are ahead. We all just need to make sure we can hang on until those days arrive.

Discounts will Rule the Day

Although consumers may not be thinking about travel right now, the truth is that very few people can pass up a great deal and mark my words, in the coming months we are

going to see deals the likes of which we have never seen before! In fact, it is already starting with promotions like Sandals "Fly Free" offer. Just as we saw post 9/11, there is a price at which consumers will put aside their fears and succumb to a "deal of a lifetime". Many will argue that once a price is reduced it is hard to raise it again later and that adding value is the way to stimulate buyers. In normal times I would agree, but we are not living in normal times. An offer of two free massages and a continental breakfast is not going to evoke the same reaction as an unbelievably priced deal like – 7 day, all inclusive Caribbean vacations for \$499 including air or a \$1,399 Safari Package with air. And savvy travel marketers know that once committed to a vacation, the likelihood that consumers will upgrade from the original offer is great.

Deals, Deals, Deals

So where do agents find these "deals of a lifetime"? You will need look no further than your email inbox or favorite trade magazine. I know that you are flooded with supplier emails on a daily basis and the temptation is to delete them. However, in the coming months mining these emails for golden opportunities will separate the survivors from the

Continue on page 86

IF YOUR CLIENTS HAVEN'T BEEN TO ITALY WITH US,
they haven't been to Italy

When your clients are looking for an authentic Italian experience, book them with Visit Italy Tours. Send them on a wine lover's trip through Tuscany or a romantic retreat to the Amalfi Coast. We offer a vast selection of pre-/post-cruise tours, private shore excursions and many off-the-beaten track sightseeing adventures. All of our tours are custom designed by Italian experts and available to travel agents at the best prices.

For more information or to request our latest brochure, call 800.255.3537 or go to www.VisitItalyTours.com

Visit Italy Tours SPECIALISTS IN ALL THINGS ITALY
Independent & Group Tours • Special Interest Tours • Honeymoons • Hotel Bookings • Car Rental




Africa. Amazing.

Discover Africa with Kenya Airways. Connect in Nairobi for destinations throughout the continent. And with our transatlantic partners - United, Virgin Atlantic, Continental and Air Canada - you'll enjoy great service, seamless connections and the most attractive fares.

Kenya Airways

www.kenya-airways.com

Sales and Reservation Offices in North America - Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Vancouver. Call 1866 KENYA AIR (1866 536 9224)





Trading Down, Not Out

Passenger traffic declined in September and international load factors tumbled by 4.4% according to IATA, at the same time, the U.S. passport-holding population is surging.

The Passport Agency issued 15,684,297 passports in 2008, second only to last year's 18.4 million total with first-timers accounting for 74.4 percent of applications; renewals for 21.2 percent. According to the European Travel Commission's estimate, that pushes the total number of passport holders resident in the U.S. from 81.3 million to 88 million for 31 percent of the U.S.-citizen population (not counting citizens residing overseas).

The two-year surge in passports is due primarily to the requirement, since January 2007, that Americans returning by air from the Caribbean, Mexico and Canada show passports. But it has also greatly expanded the "sufficiently documented" market for Europe.

The Travel Industry Association's (TIA) travel forecast naturally indicates a few bumps in the road, but notes that leisure travel is stable, business travel is projected to decline and the U.S. will be hit hard by a decline in foreign arrivals.

"Consumers are responding as we might expect during an economic slowdown," said Dr. Suzanne Cook, Senior Vice President of Research for TIA. "But travel should not simply be viewed as an economic indicator; it should be seen as a part of the solution to our economic woes. There's no doubt that if we can spur travel, we can help to turn the economy around." The forecast shows that leisure travel volume remains stable for 2008 at -0.2% and is expected to decline modestly in 2009 by -1.3%.

According to the latest travelhorizonsTM survey co-authored by TIA and the Ypartnership, seven out of 10 (71%) respondents intend to take an overnight trip of 50 miles or more from home during the next six months. Nearly half (48%) of all respondents stated they were not planning any changes to their future travel plans as result of the recent turmoil in the financial markets.

Peter Yesawich, Chairman of Ypartnership said, "The results corroborate what we have been preaching now for several months: American travelers are trading down, but not out."

Added Cook, "By no means is the sky falling...after years of growth, we're now looking at modest declines. The travel industry can manage the downturn, but it is in the country's interest to stimulate travel as one of the best means to stimulate our economy."

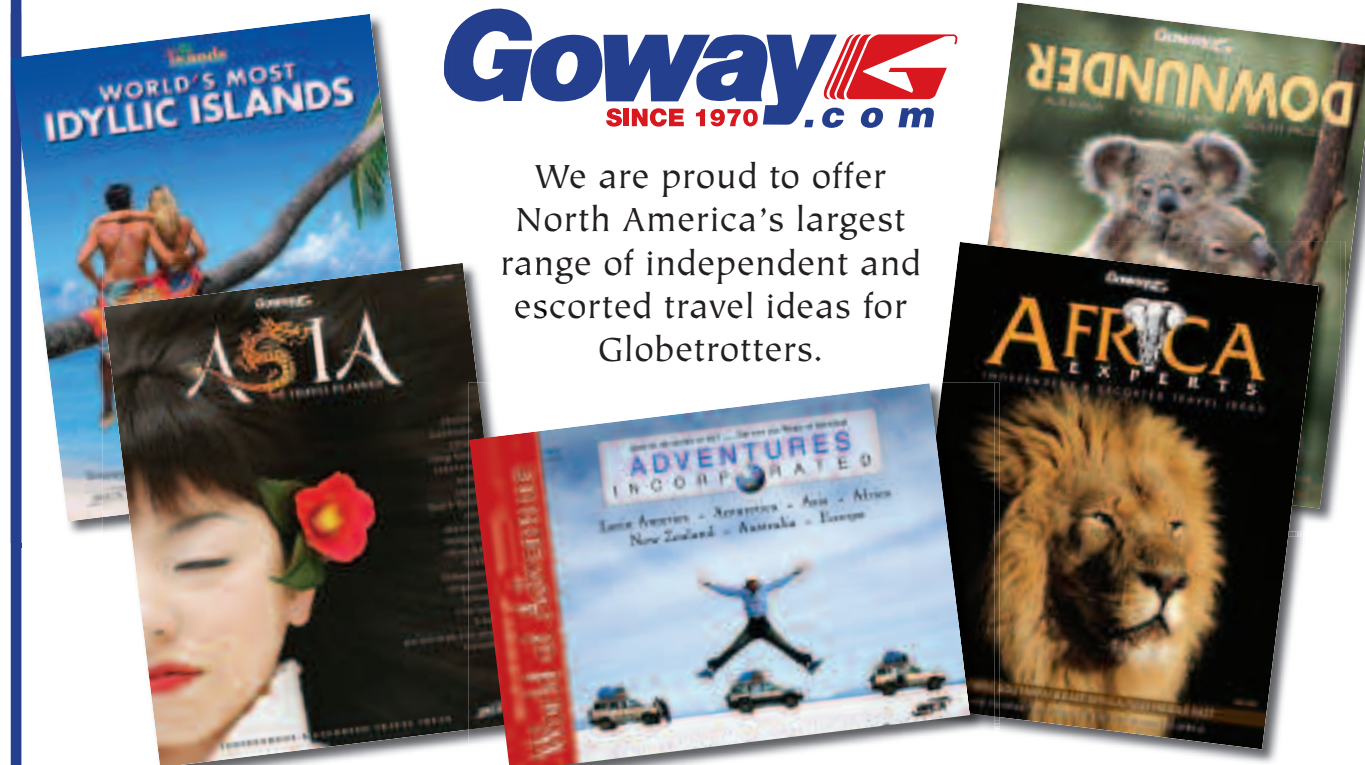
Maria Lisella, Editor

TRAVEL PLANNERS FOR GLOBETROTTERS

Quality products to ensure repeat business

Goway
SINCE 1970 .com

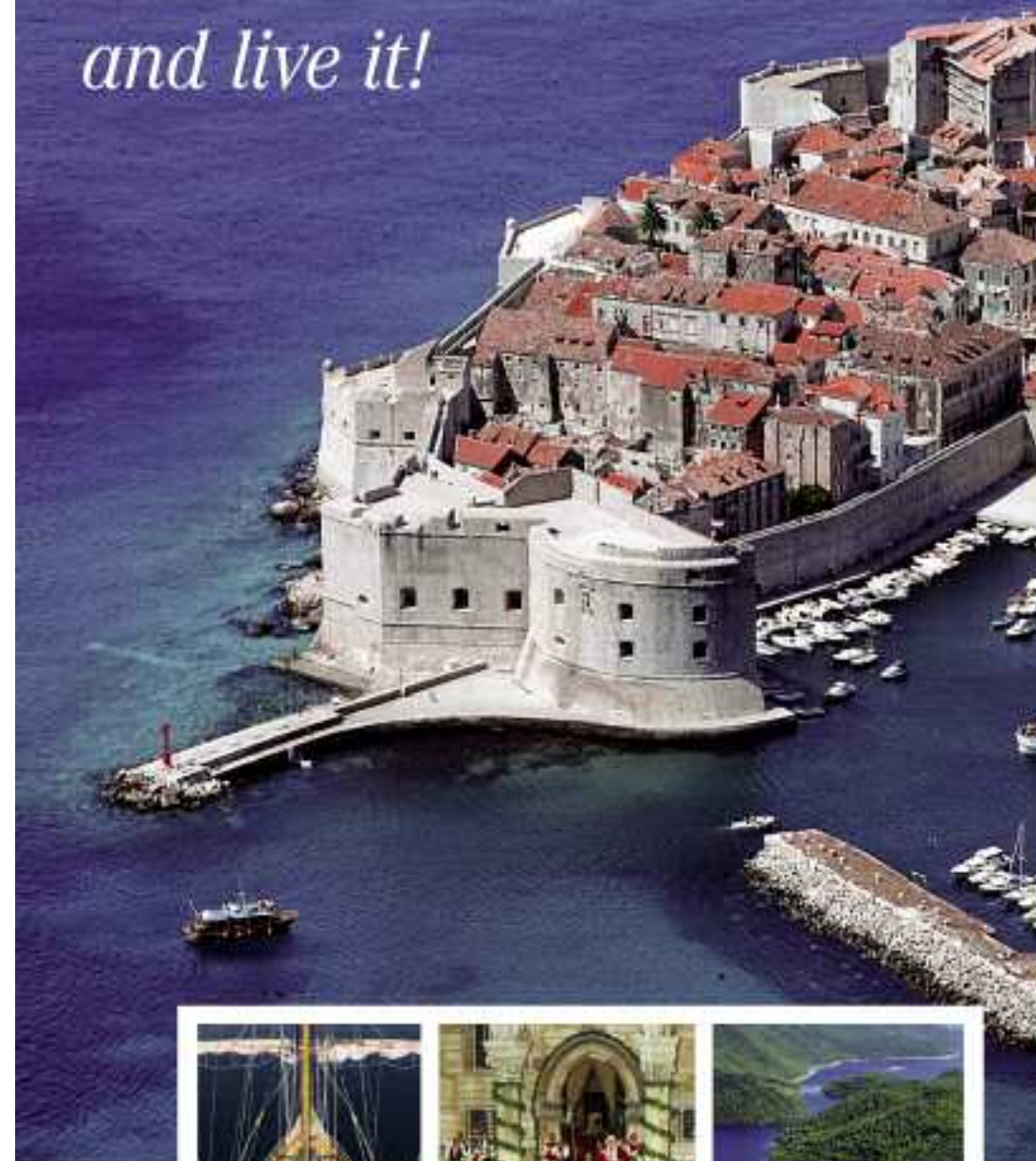
We are proud to offer North America's largest range of independent and escorted travel ideas for Globetrotters.



1 800 387 8850

www.goway.com

Croatia invites you
to feel it... to see it
and live it!



Since its establishment in 1923, Atlas has been the leading destination management company of Croatia, continuously expanding its range of products. Discover Dubrovnik - "the pearl of the Adriatic" - and Atlas DMC home town, or any other place in Croatia while enjoying the quality of our services.

Atlas facilities: a fleet of modern airconditioned motorcoaches, chauffeur-driven limousines, a fleet of high speed craft & motorboats. A network of own branch offices ensures the highest standards of service throughout the country.

Travel at ease, stay where you prefer, see everything you want

- Tour operator ground handling agent
- Hotel & private accommodation
- Transfers and excursions
- Escorted coach tours through Croatia & neighbouring countries
- Cruise ships - shore excursions
- Air and ferry tickets
- Rent-a-car reservations

If you are coming for business, you will be provided with the perfect setting that allows you to combine it with pleasure

- Corporate meetings
- Incentives
- Event planning

For those who have really mastered the art of living

- Group and FIT programmes tailored to measure,
- Special interest tours such as Art & History tours, exploring national parks, wine tasting
- Pilgrimage tours to Medugorje
- Cultural events & festival reservations

Explore wild landscapes, rivers and lakes, caves and woods, virgin-nature islands... the way that suits you best!

- Soft adventure tours
- Sailing-boat charter
- Old-timer cruises

ATLAS
DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Head Office: Vukovarska 19, 20000 Dubrovnik, Croatia
Tel: + 385 20 442 222, Fax: + 385 20 411 100,
E-mail: atlas@atlas.hr www.atlas-croatia.com

ID code: FIR-AD-20-003000038

member of adriatica.net group



A brand new program sure to charm you.

An exclusive website full of great surprises.

Special rewards just for you.

All for this one moment.

Join the Lufthansa India Specialist Program and get rewards for doing what you do best—connecting people with travel to India.

Benefits include:

- Opportunities to earn special status levels with great rewards
- Exclusive low Specialist fares to India for your personal travel
- Invitations to local events celebrating the Indian community
- An exclusive website and eNewsletter with the most up-to-date Lufthansa India news
- Specialist gifts, monthly contests, free Lufthansa material and more!

As India's number one European carrier, Lufthansa reaches 7 convenient destinations in India from 18 gateways in the U.S.

Join the Specialist Program now at www.lufthansaspecialist.com

There's no better way to fly.™



Lufthansa

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



Snapshots

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

"My Caribbean"

Trinidad, St. Vincent and the Grenadines are proud to have one of its very own named the grand prize winner, for the second consecutive year in an essay contest entitled "My Caribbean." This year, 10-year-old Storm Halbich wrote an essay judged best out of 26 finalists from throughout the Caribbean. Each student was asked to write on the topic: "If you could share a secret about your island with someone visiting for the first time, what would it be?" Storm received a \$2,000 scholarship for writing the winning essay, which will be featured in the January "Gold List" issue of Conde Nast Traveler.



Pictured are Lisa Hughes, VP and Publisher of Conde NastTraveler; Vida Bernard, Director of Tourism for St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Glen Beache, Minister of Tourism for St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Storm Halbich, winner of the essay contest; Hugh Riley, Acting Secretary General of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, at the 2008 Conde Nast Traveler "My Caribbean" essay finals held in Trinidad

Sandals' Adds Six Cities to Agent Tour

After meeting with more than 2,000 agents during the first three weeks of the North American Luxury Included® Legacy Continues Tour, Sandals Resorts has added six additional cities to their list, plus new incentives for its loyal travel agents. The tour provides travel agents with a firsthand overview of all of the new and exciting projects happening at Sandals Resorts, Beaches Resorts, the Royal Plantation Collection and Grand Pineapple Beach Resorts including new upgrades, expansions and partnerships slated for each of the resort brands.



Pictured is Sandals Resorts Founder and Chairman, Mr. Gordon 'Butch' Stewart, speaking to a captivated audience at the first leg of the Luxury Included® Legacy Continues Tour in New Jersey.

Vacation.com's Top-Selling Agents Gather

Vacation.com paid tribute to some of their top producing agencies at a special recognition luncheon in Bay Harbor, Maine. The luncheon was held during a port-of-call stop in conjunction with the annual Princess Cruises Presidential Summit event, aboard the Caribbean Princess. Vacation.com facilitates "The Power of the Partnership" among a network of quality preferred suppliers and member agencies that increase profits through disciplined marketing, comprehensive training and robust booking tools, including the proprietary EZguider sales platform.



India fares sure to charm your clients.

Sample round-trip fares, as low as:

New York –
Chennai
\$880*

Chicago –
Delhi
\$733*

Houston –
Kolkata
\$970*

Boston –
Mumbai
\$778*

Los Angeles –
Bangalore
\$1248*

Seattle –
Hyderabad
\$1182*

Depart: December 25, 2008 – April 2, 2009
Purchase by: April 1, 2009

Contact...

any of our preferred India partners
and offer your clients Lufthansa's
great low fares to India today.

C&H International: 1 866 675 2288

GTT International: 1 800 878 4283

Hari World Travel: 1 888 889 2968

Krisbi Travel: 1 773 561 4100

Maazda Travel: 1 214 637 2990

Mill-Run Tours: 1 800 MILLRUN

SkyLink Travel: 1 800 AIRONLY

Trans Am Travel: 1 800 822 7600



Lufthansa

*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 fuel surcharge, 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.

India's Kochi: Calm, Complex and Compelling

By Ben G. Frank

To reach "Incredible India," I flew, non-stop about 8,000 miles in 16 hours. I soon learned that time and distance pale when it comes to falling in love with India, this land of miracles and vast horizons. It is hard to believe that India stretches from the tropics right up to the temperate regions, from near the equator to the coldest heart of Asia.

As I traveled in the chilly north in December I was captivated by the bazaars and forts in Delhi, the perpetually compelling Taj Mahal in Agra, the Gateway of India monument in Mumbai (Bombay), yet I kept hearing about another India; the one in the south, where tourists feel the breath of history as they traverse a beautiful scenic region known as "God's own country."



Pazhassi Raja, the "Lion of Kerala", who waged war against the British in the late 18th century.

Sharing the South with God

Enthralled with thoughts of warmer weather, sunlit beaches, verdant islands, palm trees, and above all, the calmness of an area (it's even relaxing in the airports), I flew to Kochi, formerly called Cochin, in the State of Kerala which is often described as the "land of coconut." Setting down in a landscape replete with spice and exotic plants; seeing men walking around in short sleeve shirts, I removed my jack-

et to enjoy the sunshine in this city made up of lagoons, islands and inlets divided by narrow waterways.

I have wanted to visit this region that stretches out along the blue Arabian Sea because I wanted to observe the cultural remains of past migrations to India—the route taken by the first humans out of Africa thousands of years ago. It is also a region that will attract the well-traveled client: one who has been to India perhaps, or a first-timer with time enough to see both northern sites as well as adding the south for an unforgettable combination. This is a region that will attract special interest clients – those interested in Jewish heritage, or honeymooners, for instance.

Kochi, often called "Queen of the Arabian Sea," and slightly smaller than Switzerland, is the epitome of India long ago. A port-of-call for traders for thousands of years, the Arabs began trading way before Islam. The earliest mosque in India is said to be the pretty old wooden prayer hall at Cranganore, north of Kochi.

European Settlements and Occupations

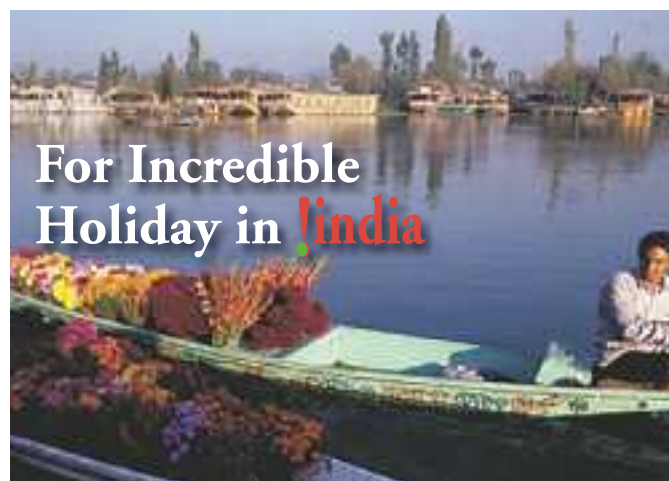
Occupied by the Portuguese in 1503, the city was the site of the first European colonial settlement in the country and remained the capital of Portuguese India until 1530 when it moved to Goa. Kochi was later occupied by the Dutch and the British and was the first princely state to willingly join the Indian Union when India gained independence in 1947.

The Jews, it is said, traded with Southern India in spices as far back as King Solomon, and it is in Kochi where one finds the oldest Jewish enclave in this nation of 1.3 billion. The Jewish community has been a part of the Indian mosaic for more than two millennia.

Very early on, Near Eastern Christians settled here on the Malabar coast where Kochi stands only 170 miles from the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent. The city is proud of the country's oldest European-built



St. Francis Assisi Cathedral in Kochi



Please contact: 421 7 Av, Suite 1004, New York, NY. 10001.

Call Toll Free: 1-888-9C INDIA (924-6342)

Tel: 212-695-1005 | Fax : 212-695-1006

Email: sans@sansincrediblevacations.com

Visit: www.sansincrediblevacations.com



SPECIALIST IN CUSTOMIZED TOURS



PURE WHITE

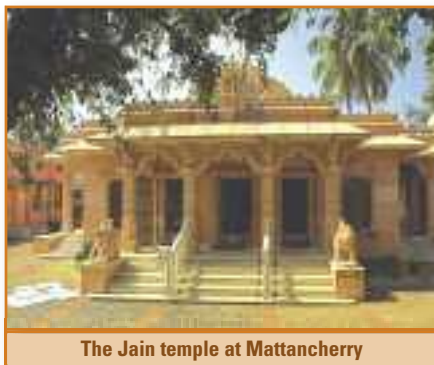
Incredible India

www.incredibleindia.org

It took 20,000 workers, 1,000 elephants and 17 years to build the Taj Mahal. World heritage site. Ultimate symbol of love.



The Tejomaya building at InfoPark, Kochi



The Jain temple at Mattancherry



The Chinese fishing net bridge in Kochi

church, St. Francis, erected in 1503 and a popular sight. Vasco da Gama, the first European to reach India was buried here for 14 years before his remains were transferred to Portugal. The tombstone remains inside the church now used by the Church of South India. Sunday services are held in English at 8 a.m.

Kochiites, as the residents are called, are an important element of South Indian culture, certainly influenced by different foreign settlements.

Walking the streets, one can easily see the diversity in people's faces: Tamils, Gujaratis, Jews, Sikkimese, Anglo-Indians, Konkani and Tuluvas. They speak **Malayalam**, the main language of communication and medium of instruction, although nearly everyone speaks English in this state, a state my excellent guide P. Gopal proudly tells me has the highest literacy rate in India.

Within Kochi and outside the city, visitors will marvel at

the splash of traditional Keralan dress, a marked contrast to western clothes. Men wear colorful long white cotton **lungi**, a long piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, with batik patterns. South Indian women wear **saris**.

Synagogue Lane

Heading to Mattancherry, a part of old Cochin City, specifically to Synagogue Lane in what is called Jew Town and one of the centers of the Kochi spice trade, I notice that shopping is in full swing. Alongside small houses, kiosk-type stores and booths dot the area. Crowded, busy, lively, friendly salespeople in a section known for bargaining and antiques.

On Synagogue Lane, we met Sarah Cohen in her souvenir shop, sewing yarmulkes (skull caps) for tourists. "We're happy," she said, referring to Cochin Jews, but perhaps "happier when our people were here." Most Jews of Cochin emigrated to Israel after the Jewish state's independence in 1948. Sixty years later, only about a dozen Jews live near the synagogue and another 50 reside in Ernakulam, another section of Kochi.

All the guides, tourist brochures and maps highlight this synagogue built in 1568. The original building was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1662 and rebuilt by the Dutch two years later. Scrolls of the Old Testament and a number of copper plates inscribed with Hebrew scripture are preserved in this house of worship at the end of Synagogue Lane.

Stunningly bedecked with chandeliers and colored glass lamps, the synagogue has been declared a historical monument by the Indian Government. Hand-painted China tiles highlight the floor of this Paradesi Synagogue; they were shipped from Canton in 1762 and no two tiles are alike. Outside this place of worship, which has the distinction of being the oldest surviving synagogue in the Commonwealth of Nations, looms a graceful clock tower built in 1760 and displays dials in Hebrew Malayalam and Roman numerals. This prayer house, which is open Sunday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to noon and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., stands on the ground near the palace of the Maharajah of Cochin overlooking a Hindu shrine.

Beyond Bazaars and Bargains

If bazaars and bargaining are not your client's style, they can travel to the bustling town of Ernakulam to textile stores such as Seematti located on Mahatma Gandhi Road, and near the Taj Residency hotel. Seematti is a multi-story textile shop, though I am told those interested in **pashminas** are apt to find better deals up north.

Guide P. Gopal points out the Kairali Shop, also on Mahatma Gandhi Road, known for exclusive products such as



Antique shop in Kochi Jewish quarters.



Annual snake boat race performed during Onam Celebrations on the Pamba River.

wood-carvings, metal, cloth fiber. The Kerala State Government runs the shop; no bargaining permitted. In fact, there's no "negotiating" price in any shop in Ernakulam, according to Gopal. Not too many tourists arrive; no parking facility. However, a short 20 minute walk from the Taj Residency can bring one to Kairali.

Incidentally, because shopping is such an integral part of tourism, Kerala holds an annual Grand Kerala Shopping Festival in December.

Among the must-sees in Kochi: Koder House at Fort Kochi, the first European town. Built during the British period, Kodae House is a heritage hotel with a fine restaurant.

Kochi has a population of about 600,000 but an extended metro-area counts 1.5 million. Visitors notice the economic boom taking place here, the high rise apartment buildings and offices, the likes of which reflect that India is on the move with a nine percent economic growth rate and the world's fastest growing major economy after China.

Kochi, where even the streets are calm, remains a place that you can indulge yourself,—especially after visiting the 19-million-mega-metropolis of Mumbai. Boat rides are very popular here. For example, guests at Taj Malabar and Taj Residency hotels can take a harbor cruise which starts at 5 p.m. and concludes at 7 p.m. Sailing around the islands in the backwaters and watching the city skyline from a slow-moving boat can bring about that peaceful interlude that one occasionally needs on this sub-continent.

Those lucky enough to be in Kochi during August /September, can witness elongated snake boats in the Vembanad Lake.

For the very high-end traveler, **Taj Malabar** is a heritage, five-star hotel located at Wellington Island. Old World charm reigns here; the name of the swimming pool is "Infinity." From the pool, visitors enjoy the sunset and slow moving ferry boats, ships, and even single-oar canoes.

I also found the four-star **Taj Residency**, to be sophisticated and extremely comfortable for American tourists as guestrooms are spacious. Don't overlook a super buffet, a view of water scenery and the evening entertainment.

There, I met tour operator and coordinator Anil Avraham who prepares itineraries. Avraham, who speaks English and Hebrew, handles many groups. He raves about observing

Chinese fishing nets, a throwback to the ancient maritime trade. These nets at the entrance of the harbor and along the backwaters were introduced by the court of Kublai Khan. Avraham recommends visits to the tea plantations, the lakes, the wildlife of Kerala, a paradise for those interested in the outdoors where I admire the remarkable foliage. Call **011-91-84606-3553**; E-mail anil_avraham@hotmail.com

Not to be missed is the Bolgatty Palace, located on Mulavukad Island that was built by the Dutch in 1744. A bridge connects the island to Kochi. Once a mansion of the

The Golden Triangle

Delhi - Agra - Jaipur

7 Days / 5 Nights

From \$1399 pp

Package includes:

- Meet and assist on arrival and departure.
- 5 nights first class hotel accommodation.
- Day use hotel room in Delhi.
- Breakfast daily at hotel.
- Entrances to the monuments.
- All transfers and sightseeing by air conditioned motor coach or private car.
- Elephant / Jeep ride in Jaipur.
- Local English speaking Guide in all cities.

10% COMMISSION

STI
800-570-0304
info@sti-travel.com

Disclaimer: International prices are standard but availability varies. Based on staying in a double room. Special requirements (single, triple, etc.) and other restrictions may be applied through the tour. Taxes, visas, insurance fees, fuel and other charges levied by the Government of India are subject to change. Itinerary subject to availability and 7 day advance booking. Refunds will be refunded.

BEST OF INDIA & NEPAL

14 or 17 days

From ancient times, people from all over the world have been drawn to India and over time have added their unique influence - threads that have collectively enhanced the rich cultural fabric that is today's India. Visit this land, where history is alive in music and dance, and the culture is steeped in tradition.

Visit: Mumbai, Udaipur, Ranakpur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Khajuraho, Delhi, Kathmandu

Call for dates & rates!

Get Your 2009 SITA Brochures for India & Other Exotic Destinations

SITA WORLD TOURS
Established 1933
Celebrating 75 Years of Excellence

Africa • Australia & New Zealand • Asia • India • South America • European River Cruising

SITA World Tours
16250 Ventura Blvd., Suite 300, Encino, CA 91436
sitatours@sitatours.com

www.sitatours.com 800.421.5643

CST # 2003643-40



The Bolgatty Palace.



Hindu temple in Old Goa.



Musical Walkway adjoining the Fishing net Bridge.

British Resident, this structure now stands as a high-end hotel managed by the Kerala Tourist Development Board.

Ah, Goa, the trendy in-destination, especially for honeymooners. The "hedonism of its sun, sand and sea," calls to me and like thousands of tourists who still want to stay south of Mumbai, but who love the civility found in Kerala, we head north.

But not too far north; even though I am an intrepid traveler, I want to stay close to the safe, natural harbors I found in Kochi, a corner of "God's own country."

Traveling with Land Experts

Agents designing FIT programs may want to contact certified guide P. Gopal, whom I would highly recommend. He charges about \$35 per day for local touring and \$80 per day for excursions beyond the regional limits, can be reached at cell 011-91-959-567-4243; E-mail devigopi@vsnl.com

Raju Banerjee, business development manager of award-winning Indus Travels, agrees with this writer that "the south is nature at its best." She went on to say that the area

"is totally different" from the north of India—especially "the culture and the influences of the Christian missionaries." Indus is selling a new tour called "Classical South India." Call 866-978-2997; www.industravels.ca

Anshuman Khanna, a travel consultant at SITA World Travel in Encino, CA., highlighted SITA's "Silks and Spices" 15-day deluxe tour, that travels through the backwaters of southern India with stays at a lodge or resort on Lake Vembanad. The tour starts in Mumbai and goes to Bangalore, Chikmagalur, Mysore, Cochin, Kumarkom, Periyar City, Madurai and Chennai. Call 800-421-5643; ext.1507; www.sitatours.com

Sky Bird Travel and Tours has launched Sky Vacations with the eight-day, "Classical South India" tour, from Chennai, to Kancipuram, Mahabalipuram, Madurai, Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kumarakom ending at Kochi. Call 877-666-3113; www.skyvacations.net

Picasso Tours' 12-night "The Exotic South" tour, travels from Chennai, to Tanjor, Madurai, Ponticherry, Cochin, a journey which ends in Mumbai. A three-night extension to Goa is offered. Call 888-463-4249; www.picassotours.com

STI Travel LLC located in New Jersey announced a new portfolio of FIT & Group Tours to India. Two years ago, STI inaugurated its new office in New Delhi, India, which operates inbound and outbound tour packages to several destinations in the Middle East, China, South America and Europe and India from the U.S.

In early 2009, STI Travel will roll out its "Signature Journey Series" to India, which was designed to appeal to special interests such as: Wellness, Royal Retreats, Eco-Tourism, wild Life and others. Call 800-570-0304; or visit www.sti-travel.com

For Agents Only

Sans Incredible India organizes comprehensive air-inclusive fam tours for travel agents leaving every Thursday priced from \$1,599. Two one-week options are being offered. The Gold Fam includes Delhi-Agra-Ranthambore-Jaipur; the Green Fam covers Mumbai-Kochi-Periyar-Kumarakom. Call 888- 9C-INDIA; 347-323-2252; E-mail ramchopra@incrediblevacationsindia.com

So Many Flights to India

Air India offers 41 direct flights from the U.S. and Canada, and also flies daily non-stop from New York to Delhi and Mumbai. Delta Air Lines has launched (a new daily non-stop flight between Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and Mumbai , although it has discontinued its flights from New York to Mumbai.

Continental Airlines flies non-stop from Newark to Mumbai and Delhi. Lufthansa has grown in the India market and counts 45 non-stop flights weekly from Frankfurt and

Munich to six gateways in India.

Within India, this writer can attest to Mumbai-based Jet Airways, India's largest privatized airline that is in the midst of a massive global expansion.

My flights on Jet Airways, from Delhi to Mumbai and on to Kochi and back to Mumbai were convenient and reliable.

For information, contact the India Tourist Office, 800-953-9399; 212-586-4901 (E. Coast), or 213-380-8855 (W. Coast), or visit www.incredibleindia.com

SkyLink
The Airline Travel Center

Best airfares to INDIA

www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

We offer the best:

- Combination of airlines to INDIA
- Largest choice of airfares:
- Economy & Business Class fares
- Net fares and published
- Commissions

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to India see page 80 of the Listings Section

IN THE NEWS

Goway Rides to the Land of the Maharajahs

Goway Travel reports that it continues to see an increase in bookings to India and is drawing record numbers of North Americans to this fascinating country. One of Goway's signature Holidays of a Lifetime trips is the fully-escorted 17-day Splendours of India. Prices start from \$7,269 flying from the east coast on British Airways. One of Goway's hottest sellers for 2008 and 2009 is Classic India from \$4,099.

This 13-day independent trip starts in New Delhi and ends in Mumbai and includes the fascinating cities of Varanasi, Khajuraho, Agra, Jaipur and Udaipur. The traditional Golden Triangle Tour also from New Delhi, includes Agra, Jaipur and the Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary. This nine-day tour is priced from \$1,629. Call 800-387-8850; www.goway.com

Royal Rajasthan Rides in New Year

The city of Rajasthan will launch a second super luxury train on January 11, 2009 with many special on-board facilities. The new tourist train, "Royal Rajasthan on Wheels," will have modern facilities such as two suites, a spa, lounges, Wi-Fi Internet connectivity, ISD telephone and a spacious super deluxe saloon. Eight-day programs start at \$800 per night based on two sharing a compartment.

Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) and the Railways will jointly run the train, which will follow the same itinerary as the highly successful Palace on Wheels with some minor alterations.

For more information, visit www.rajasthan-tourism.gov.in or, visit www.theluxurytrains.com

ASIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

BEST BUYS

\$346 CHINA

The Shangri-La Hotel Fuzhou's "Hot Spring Getaway" package, available through Dec. 31, 2008, is set in one of the three main hot spring spots in China, and well-furnished hot spring scenic areas downtown and on the outskirts of the city have become a retreat for both city insiders and business travelers. Priced at about \$350, the "Hot Spring Getaway" includes: accommodations, buffet breakfast daily for two, one-day tour to Huang Chu Lin Forest Park and hot spring treatment for two, round-trip transfers and late check-out till 4 p.m. subject to availability. The package requires three days' advance booking. Call 866-565-5050; www.shangri-la.com

\$1399 INDIA

New Jersey-based STI Travel, a division of the Sakkara Travel Group sells the six-night, land-only package Discover Incredible India's Golden Triangle. The tour presents a kaleidoscope of three famous Indian cities Delhi, Agra and Jaipur that is sure to leave you speechless. Arrangements include first-class accommodations in each city, daily breakfast, and entrance to Taj Mahal, Elephant / Jeep ride in Jaipur. Bookings must be made by Dec 31, 2008 for travel no later than April 30, 2009. Post tour "Call of the Wild" extension available for additional \$938. Airfare is not included but available upon request.

Call 800-570-0304; www.sti-travel.com

\$4194 INDIA

The 'Oberoi Exotic Vacations' package offers the ideal opportunity to experience some of the best hotels in the world and enjoy exceptional value.

Priced at \$4,194 for a six-night stay and \$ 2,796 for a four-night stay, the package includes accommodation for two persons, breakfast and dinner daily and return transfer from the nearest airport or railway station. Valid through December 19, 2008, this package is available at The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra; The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur; The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur and The Oberoi Vanyavilas, Ranthambhore (the package is priced at \$4,644 for a six-night stay and \$3,096 for a four-night stay in a Luxury Tent). Booked independently of the package, the nightly room rate for two persons starts from \$656. Call 800-562-3764; www.oberoihotels.com

Go to www.jaxfaxmagazine.com to Download JAXFAX E-Magazine for additional features such as:



**French Polynesia
Gateway to
Inner Peace**

By Anne Burgess

make my trip
Your India Travel Specialist

**Need to plan a trip to India?
Come to us!**

GOLDEN TRIANGLE

Price: **USD 499** per person on twin share.
(This price is commissionable to the agents by 10%)

DELHI **JAIPUR** **AGRA**

Hotels: Delhi - The Chorus | Jaipur - Park Prime | Agra - Howard Park Plaza

Price includes:

- | 02 night accommodation in Delhi on twin sharing per person basis | 02 night accommodation in Jaipur on twin sharing per person basis | 01 night accommodation in Agra on twin sharing per person basis | Daily buffet breakfast | Inter city transfers and local sightseeing as per the itinerary by AC car | Applicable taxes |

MakeMyTrip Inc. 60 East, 42 Street, 411 New York, NY 10165 Telephone: (212) 760 1511
Call Toll Free 1-877-INDIA -16 or log on to www.makemytrip.com for 24/7 assistance with your travel planning
Or you can also email to ibt@makemytrip.com



French Polynesia Gateway to Inner Peace

By Anne Burgess

Hidden away in almost every client's secret dreams is the urge to runaway to the tropical paradise of Tahiti and French Polynesia. And no wonder these islands have been the ultimate getaway for more than a century. From Robert Louis Stevenson to James Mitchener, Herman Melville to Jack London, Paul Gauguin to Marlon Brando all have sought escape and renewal in this tropical paradise.

Most visitors to French Polynesia will set their sights on the three best known islands: Tahiti, Moorea and Bora Bora, unquestionably pearls of the Pacific. Each is breathtaking in beauty and personality. These are not the only islands from which to choose, French Polynesia is composed over 130 islands spread over almost two million square miles of the eastern South Pacific. However, aside from a handful of islands most are too primitive to be attractive for 21st century sun seekers.

The major obstacle to selling vacations to this paradise is the cost: in a word 'Expensive.' Burgers and beer for two will cost about \$50 and a simple spaghetti dinner from a buffet can set you back over \$100. Hotel costs are also high. Those sweet little bungalows built over the water come with a price tag that easily reaches \$800 plus per night. But, with some savvy planning, trade offs can be made for a once in a lifetime trip to this corner of the earth.

Tip: Have a baguette for breakfast or lunch. This oh-so-French bakery staple remains one of the best bargains in the islands (because the bakeries receive subsidies from the government). And keeping the "French" in French Polynesia is a cultural priority.

Choosing Among the Islands

Tahiti's 118 islands and atolls are located south of the equator, in the same time zone as Hawaii, halfway between California and Australia.

For clients seeking a remote and mostly unspoiled vacation, beautiful Bora Bora is the island of choice. Dominated by two mountain peaks and fringed by coral reefs the island will take your breath away.

There has been a considerable amount of hotel building in the last few years and this small island is now home to the **InterContinental Le Moana Resort, Le Meridien Bora Bora, Sofitel Motu Bora Bora, the Bora Bora Nui Resort & Spa** and the **Bora Bora Lagoon Resort & Spa**; all of the which have private over the water bungalows and steep price tags to match. But if your honeymooning clients are looking for a truly memorable time they are definitely worth the splurge.

More modestly priced hotels include the **Novotel Bora Bora Beach Resort**, the **Club Med Bora Bora** (which can arrange same sex room sharing for single travelers), and the **Hotel Matai Polynesia**.

Bora Bora is the island to while away your hours and days swimming and snorkeling in crystal clear lagoons and spending your nights exploring the surprising number of fine dining restaurants. This island is the definition of "laid back."

Moorea, another Tahitian pearl, is only a 30-minute ferry ride from Tahiti. The commute to Tahiti is so simple that Moorea has almost become a bedroom community for the city of Papeete. But this is no usual suburb.

Moorea is dramatically beautiful, with plenty of lagoons

and reefs in which to swim and snorkel. The hotels are spread sufficiently apart from each other so that visitors won't feel as though they are facing a shoreline chock-a-block with properties.

As with Bora Bora the large luxury hotels are well represented in Moorea: the **InterContinental Resort and Spa Moorea, Moorea Pearl Resort and Spa, Sofitel la Ora Moorea** and the **Sheraton Moorea Lagoon Resort and Spa** all offer a wide range of accommodations, including those exotic but expensive "motus" (bungalows over the water). A moderately priced gem is the **Club Bali Hai**, a rather basic hotel but it has the least expensive over the water bungalows and a fabulous view of Cook's Bay. Inexpensive accommodations can be found but they are mostly pension-style or may be located well away from the beach.

Unlike Bora Bora you can fill a few days sightseeing with trips to Belvedere Lookout, a locally beloved viewpoint with an unmatched panoramic view of the South Pacific; Atiraa Waterfall, that plunges more than 100 feet into a small pool; the Tiki Theatre Village, a cultural center; and all kinds of hiking, fishing and water sport activities.

The island of Tahiti, with the very cosmopolitan city of Papeete is the destination for clients who want it all – great beaches and a few modest museums, handicrafts and couture design, water sports and a round of golf. Tahiti boasts both in town hotels in Papeete and secluded resort properties scattered around the perimeter of the island. If your



clients are looking for peace and quiet make sure they don't locate too near the city. Here, as on the other islands, the major players include the **InterContinental Resort Tahiti**, a favorite of North Americans; **Le Meridien Tahiti**, with its very European style; the **Sofitel Maeva Beach Tahiti**, with terrific view of Moorea; and the **Sheraton Tahiti and Spa**, a prime convention destination.

Moderate and budget accommodations generally lack their own beaches. The exception to this rule is **Le Royal Tahitian** that boasts a black sand beach. Inexpensive hotels are either adjacent to the fairly noisy airport or more rustic than their price tag would lead you to believe.

Dining options in Tahiti are varied, and generally expensive, with the exception of **Les Roulottes**. These owner-operated meal trucks appear in the evenings, set up shop on the roadsides along the waterfront and start serving charbroiled steaks or chicken. Some trucks even specialize in pizza or crepes. Just walk or drive along until you find something to tempt your taste buds and revel in the carnival like atmosphere of these mobile cantinas.

Ready for pure relaxation? Pack your pareo and set your course for Tahiti where warm winds and the warmest of welcomes await you. Warmth of spirit is the most notable trait of life in French Polynesia. This is not an attitude reserved for tourists it is everywhere from the supermarket clerks at Carrefour to the driver of "le shuttle" (the local transit service) that will wait for you to catch up and ride. It's easy to understand how centuries of visitors from Fletcher Christian to Marlon Brando have been seduced by Tahiti and its people. So why come to a luxury enclave? To be pampered. To while away an afternoon on a private beach miles from the madding crowd. To rediscover the inner peace within you — with a little help from excellent service and warm, gracious smiles.

For more information, contact the Tahiti Tourism North America, 800-365-4949; E-mail Tiare@Tahiti-Tourisme.com; www.Tahiti-Tourisme.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to French Polynesia see page 00 of the Listings Section

Fast Facts

Tahiti's capital city is Papeete, with Faa'a Airport about 8 hours by air from Los Angeles (LAX) and about 13 hours by air from New York (JFK). Air Tahiti Nui, Tahiti's national carrier, offers 12 nonstop direct flights weekly from LAX and three nonstop direct flights weekly from JFK between May and October. Other carriers to Tahiti include Air France and Air New Zealand. Hawaiian Airlines also offers one nonstop flight weekly from Honolulu.

Airport: All international flights arrive at Tahiti-Faaa International Airport, an open-air relatively modern facility.

Taxis: Many flights arrive later in the evening so be aware that taxi fares almost double as soon as darkness falls.

Entry requirements: Visitors, other than French Nationals, must have a passport valid for six months beyond their intended stay. Citizens of the US and Canada may visit for up to 1 month without a visa. No vaccines are required unless you are arriving from cholera, yellow fever or plague area.

Best Time to Visit: July and August are the busiest months as this is when the islands are at their most dry, although any time from May to October is very pleasant. The temperature varies very little during the year ranging from 74 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit.

For Travel Agents: The Tahiti Tiare Program is a destination specialist program that offers free information once you register at the site below.

Captivating Egypt's Affordability

By Maria Lisella

Egypt, the oldest tourist destination in the world has been attracting visitors from as far back as the ancient world to view fabulous monuments built to last for eternity, and has cast its captivating spell on modern travelers as well. Egyptian Tourism Minister Zoheir Garrana reports that the number of people visiting Egypt increased more than 25 percent for the period of 2007 to 2008.

JF did an informal survey of the range of products available to agents through tour operators, some of whom specialize in the region or the country. We asked what distinguished one product from another and is it possible or even advisable to offer "affordable" packages, not cheap or budget, but affordable and what that might mean. One of the major features that contributes to the bottom line is the amount of components that are sold together such as roundtrip international airfare. Most meals are included in the packages cited below, as well as a three, four or even seven-night Nile cruise. The addition of celebrity Egyptologists to accompany tours enhances the programs as does the appeal of adding extensions that can be arranged through the same company, assuring seamless transfers and return home.

Defining Affordable

Diane Panasci, head of Marketing and Product Development at **Foreign Independent Tours**, reports she has just updated the company's popular starter trip: the five-night/seven-day Egypt Your Way travel program. "It is an air-inclusive package that includes transfers, accommodations, breakfast daily starting at \$1,399 per person double, making it an affordable way to get to and stay in Cairo. Clients can then add a wide array of optional tours including a Nile Cruise, a stop at the Red Sea, Jordan or Kenya."

FIT has been packaging tours to Egypt for more than 20 years; its portfolio ranges to a 17-day program that combines Egypt and Kenya priced from \$3,799 per person with roundtrip airfare from New York. Call **800-248-3487**; www.fittours.com

For the last 28 years, **STI Voyages in France**, member of **Sakkara Travel Group**, has been operating within the French market. STI Travel USA has been inaugurated as the



EGYPT NO

sole branch of STI Voyages, and is now a full operating company, located in Hackensack, New Jersey, offering full travel services to various and numerous destinations.

Sakkara Travel Group, Mother Company, has been operating since 1972 and currently ranked among the top ten producing travel companies in Egypt as classified by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism.

The company's eight-day, air-inclusive Nile Voyager is priced at \$999 per person double. The tour is divided between three nights in Cairo, sightseeing in Aswan, Kom Ombo, Edfu and Luxor and three nights on a five-sar Nile cruise. Call 800-570-0304; www.sti-travel.com

At Boston-based **Esplanade Tours**, Jackie Keith says, "The important thing is value for money of course, and the security in knowing that our ground agents are people we have worked with for 40 years, are extremely dependable, yet flexible if the client wants more time in the Egyptian Museum than the Bazaars." She says, "The last few Egypt itineraries I have done include four or five-star accommodations- not super deluxe, but I think people realize that it is important to stay in recognized properties, in good locations. We have excellent guides, enough staff to really make sure they don't wander off on their own. Also the food is better and safer from tummy aches if they stay in nice places." Esplanade Tours has been planning customized and group itineraries since 1954 and has been recommended by **National Geographic**. Call 800-426-5492, 800-628-4893; E-mail info@esplanadetours.com; www.esplanadetours.com

Ya'lla Tours lists more than 20 distinct itineraries in four hotel categories, from four-star to deluxe. Programs range from two and three-day stopovers to the 13-day Ultimate Egypt, all of which are privately escorted by a licensed Egyptologist and a driver. Touring from Nile cruises is done in small groups with

optional private touring available for a supplement. "We offer a wide selection of variations on a theme. There are a handful of sites that most travelers to Egypt want to see – the Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza, the Valley of the Kings, Karnak Temple and Abu Simbel," says Ronen Paldi, president of Ya'lla Tours. "These sites form the foundation of most of our tours and from there we build in extras such as time at the Red Sea or in Alexandria. Because all our overland touring is privately escorted, we are flexible: published itineraries are suggestions as we customize itineraries for a good portion of our travelers."

For travelers who want just the highlights, Deluxe Tour of Egypt, Taste of Egypt and Jewels of the Nile are recommended. The Glory of Egypt and Wonder of Egypt include time at the Red Sea and on the Sinai Peninsula. Crown of Egypt and Magical Egypt both include time in Alexandria. More specialized itineraries include the 13-day Desert Safari which explores Egypt's Western Desert with stops at the Siwa and Bahariya oases; and two biblical programs, In the Footsteps of the Exodus and In the Footsteps of the Holy Family. Call 800-644-1595 or visit www.yallatours.com

Marty Seslow, VP of Sales and Marketing at **Gate 1 Travel** says it is tough to generalize about the popularity of one product over another since the company has planned several programs to Egypt for 2009 that range from eight to 16 days' duration. Gate 1 sells most of the programs with international airfare included, a salient feature for those looking for a simple sale, and a fairly all-inclusive program.

Among Gate 1's most basic products are the eight-day Affordable Egypt starting at \$1,599 per person for land and air for instance and the eight or 10-day Egypt for Less, all of which

include international airfare, domestic flights within Egypt, two to four nights' hotel accommodations in Cairo, and three or four nights on a Nile River cruise. "Several tours and transfers are optional and can be added so that the passengers customize the vacation.... not sure if that really qualifies as dressing it up," says Seslow, "but to do so might include the addition of optional excursions, upgrade of accommodations, or additional destinations including the Red Sea, Jordan or Israel." Call **800-682-3333**; E-mail: info@gate1travel.com; www.gate1travel.com

Indus Travels has prevailed upon one of the world's most renowned Egyptologists, Dr. Zahi Hawass to accompany participants on a 14-day journey to explore the mysteries of this ancient land. Starting at the Giza Plateau, just outside of Cairo, the site of one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Great Pyramid.

Included on this program is a private lecture and discussion with Dr. Zahi Hawass, accommodations 33 meals as listed on the itinerary plus breakfast daily, meet and greet at Cairo airport by an Indus Travels' Representative, roundtrip airport transfers, sightseeing tours in private AC Coach, services of an English-speaking Egyptologist during sightseeing tours, a four-night deluxe cruise, all domestic airfare, day trip with lunch to Alexandria, entrance fees at all sightseeing spots. Prices range from \$4,290 to \$4,690 per person double for land only. Call **866-978-2997**; mail@industravels.ca or visit www.industravels.com

According to **Goway's AFRICAExperts** General Manager, Moira Smith, "Our passenger numbers to Egypt have increased 38% over last year. Reflecting the value of our programs, we are offering up to six nights' free accommodations at a deluxe Red Sea Resort to passengers booking our Classic Egypt, Mysteries

Everything you need to know www.TravelEgypt.com

Our Unique Programs Include:

- The Ladies Tour: In depth examination of Egypt's Queens & Goddesses,
- Child's Egypt: The perfect tour for families.
- Birds of the Pharaohs: combining history with incredible birding.
- The David Roberts Photography tour: for amateurs and experts.

Plus • Walking Tours • Sport Fishing • Scuba Diving • Camel Treks and more...

Toll free: 1-877-778-3497 • E-mail: travelegyptusa@gmail.com

History comes alive with our classic Nile valley tours led by top Egyptologists.

EGYPT
Egypt Tourism Authority

FOREIGN INDEPENDENT TOURS
Ancient Mystique...A Lifetime of Memories

Call: **800-248-3487**
Visit: www.fittours.com

Egypt Your Way
7 Days From **\$1399**
Tuesday Departures Nov 2008 to March 2009
This is Egypt A la Carte! Make it Yours.
Includes: R/T air, 5 nights in Cairo, breakfast daily

Nubian Jewel
8 Days From **\$2199**
A Cruise Tour. Ancient Cairo & Nubia
Sail Lake Nasser. Aswan to Abu Simbel
Departures Thru Mar '09. Includes: RT Trans-Atlantic Air from JFK to Cairo, All internal air and transfers within Egypt, 3 nights at 5* Sofittel Sphinx Hotel, 3 nights aboard M/S Eugenie in a standard cabin, Upgrades are available, Breakfast daily in Cairo, Visit to Great Pyramids and the defending Sphinx, All meals and shore excursions from Aswan to Abu Simbel on Lake Nasser.

Extensive Egypt with Sharm El Sheikh
15 Days From **\$2199**
History, Culture and Beach!
Depart thru April 2009. Includes 5 nights in Cairo with breakfast daily, 4 nights in Sharm El Sheikh with all meals, and a 4-night Nile Cruise including all meals.

Leisurely Deluxe
Cruise Tour of Egypt
12 Days From **\$2199**
7 nts on the Nile. 3 in Downtown Cairo
Departures thru Sept '09. Includes: RT Air, All transfers in Egypt including portage and luggage handling, 3-night Downtown Cairo, breakfast daily, 7-night Queen Nubila Cruise, featuring Outside Junior-Suite Cabins and including all meals and shore excursions listed, Service of an English-speaking guide, All entrance fees and hotel taxes

*Include Round Trip Air NYC-Cairo. Egypt transfers. AC motor coach. English-speaking guide. Prices: p.p. on dbl occ, subject to availability at time of booking. The "from price" reflects the lowest available price valid for a specific departure date(s). Prices do not include airline taxes & fees, ranging from \$85 to \$350 p.p. depending on the route & airline(s) used.

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

& Magic of Egypt, Ancient Wonders or Pyramids to Petra tours before **December 31, 2008.** Extensions include Israel and Jordan. One of Goway's biggest sellers is the Mysteries & Magic of Egypt tour, a 15-day trip starting and ending in Cairo with extensive sightseeing, a four-night Nile Cruise, a visit to Alexandria, and starts from \$2,089.

The nine-day traditional Classic Egypt tour includes Cairo sightseeing and a four-night Nile Cruise and is priced from \$1,181 and offers the flexibility of adding extensions to Abu Simbel, Alexandria, Red Sea beach stays or a visit to Israel and Jordan. Optional add-ons are the five-day Jordan tour starting from \$929 or the eight-day Holyland tour.

Back by popular demand is the 15-day Pyramids to Petra tour that starts in Cairo, ends in Amman and includes Cairo, a Nile Cruise, Sinai, Red Sea, Petra and Amman all starting from \$2,758. Call **800-245-0920**; E-mail info@africaexperts.com; www.AfricaExperts.com

Known for its expertise in the Eastern Mediterranean and especially in Greece, **Cloud Tours** has been selling tours to Egypt for over 15 years. Says Cally Papas, "We offer two tours to Egypt—the nine-day Majestic Nile tour and the eight-day Nile Fantasy. Both include round-trip airfare from NY, three nights in Cairo and a three-night Nile Cruise. Majestic Nile adds a stop in Abu Simbel. Both tours highlight visits to the Egyptian Museum, the Great Pyramids, the Great Sphinx of Giza, the Valley of the Kings and Queens, the Temples of Karnak and Luxor. We can extend



the tours to Alexandria and Sharm El Sheikh. First-class to Superior Deluxe accommodations are available. Customized packages are also available throughout Egypt. Another option is a seven-day cruise to Egypt and Jordan aboard a mega-yacht.

Participants will experience a harmonious balance between conventional cruising and private yachting along with an exciting voyage of discovery, unraveling the wonders of the Red Sea. Weekly departures every Friday from Hurghada for this seven-day cruise with the following ports of call: Sharm el Sheikh, Ras Mohamed, Aqaba, Taba, Safaga with shore excursions offered to Santa Caterina Monastery, Petra, Luxor where participants can enjoy swimming and snorkeling in the Red Sea. Call **800-223-7880**; **718-721-3808**; E-mail info@clouddtours.com

While no one would confuse **Travel Egypt** with a budget company, Terry McKendree, president of the firm offers some tips for agents. "We are not a budget company and we find that upscale travelers are still our main source of business."

That said, he suggests agents review the company's Incredible Egypt tour, which is a good introduction to the Nile Valley for budget-minded travelers. It's a real bargain as the hotels are upscale and the group sizes are kept small. Programs are guaranteed to operate with even one traveler, but never more than 16 in one group. "Another wonderful tour, a little more upscale, is our Nile Treasures and last, our Fantastic Egypt, which includes Alexandria, and is a very popular program," he adds.

Travel Egypt distinguishes itself by reserving superior or deluxe rooms (never standard) in upscale hotels, Egyptologists (many with multiple degrees, such as Egyptology and Art History), and new transportation vehicles (all 2008 or 2009 models) with the smallest vehicle being a mini-van, adds McKendree.

The new website has reservations forms at the conclusion of each tour outline. Visit any of the following sites: www.travelegypt.com; www.egyptadventures.com; www.nilecruising.com

Homeric Tours' most popular package is the eight-day Egyptian Escape that includes a three-night stay in Cairo, a three-night Nile Cruise visiting Aswan and Luxor, a full-day tour of Cairo, all shore excursions, transfers and the services of an English-speaking guide, priced from \$1,939.

The 13-day Nile Explorer package features Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, Abu Simbel and Lake Nasser. Three nights in Cairo, sightseeing tours of Cairo, Abu Simbel, Aswan and Luxor, a four-night deluxe Nile Cruise plus a four-night Lake Nasser cruise, both components include all meals and shore excursions. Prices including transatlantic airfare start at \$3,449.

With any package, travelers can add an extension to a nearby destination within Egypt or to the countries of Jordan and Greece. A three-night stay at a Red Sea Resort – in either Sharm El Sheikh or Hurghada – starts at \$479 with airfare, accommodations, breakfast and transfers.

A four-night extension to Jordan's Amman and Petra with airfare, hotel, breakfast & dinner, and three sightseeing tours begin at \$929. Call **800-223-5570**; E-mail info@homerictours.com; www.homerictours.com

EGYPT

Wide Variety of Deluxe Tours at Incomparable Prices & Services

EGYPTIAN ESCAPE	NILE & RED SEA	NILE WONDER
from \$2029 dbl. occ.	from \$2529 dbl. occ.	from \$2859 dbl. occ.
Includes airfare from NY, fuel surcharge, 3N Cairo, 4D Nile cruise, sightseeing, transfers	Includes airfare from NY, fuel surcharge, 3N Cairo, 3N Sharm El Sheikh, 4D Nile Cruise sightseeing, transfers	Includes airfare from NY, fuel surcharge, 4N Cairo, 2N Luxor, 5D Nile Cruise, Sound & Light show, sightseeing, transfers

Call Toll-Free • 800-223-5570
55 E. 58th St. New York, NY 10022 • Tel. 212-753-1100
info@homerictours.com • www.HomericTours.com

HONEYMOON SPECIALISTS EGYPT **UST-A**

- Best Deluxe Itineraries.
- Best Hotels & Best Locations.
- Air add-ons available from most US cities.
- Prices plus \$90 in Gov't taxes and fees.
- CITA 201003-20

And for Independent Travelers...

Travel Bound offers a la carte options in Egypt as it does all over the world, allowing agents to stack up the components their clients really want to create customized programs. Agents can put together a combination of hotel, Nile cruise, other add-on sightseeing and roundtrip transfers to customize a land package for independent travel clients.

Pricing for a three night cruise from Aswan to Luxor starts at \$374 per person double; \$443 for a four-night cruise in the opposite direction and a seven night cruise that begins and ends in Aswan or Luxor starts from \$614. Hotels range from five-stars to four and begin as low as \$30 at the Isis Island in Aswan to \$116 at the Sofitel El Gezira in Cairo.

Travel Bound has added a number of new excursions ranging in price from \$35 to \$129 per person. From Cairo for instance, there is a full-day tour to Alexandria for \$116 per person, from Sharm El Sheikh, two new programs include trips to the Ras Mohamed National Park and St. Catherine Monastery.

Private transfers to all major cities are also listed costing from \$12 to \$80 depending on city and airport. To access new promotions, agents need only click the upper left corner homepage when surfing the site. Visit www.booktravelbound.com

For more information, contact the Egyptian Tourist Authority, 212- 332-2570; fax 212-956-6439; E-mail info.us@egypt.travel; www.egypttravel.com

Best airfares to EGYPT

www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

We offer the best:

- Combination of airlines to EGYPT
- Largest choice of airfares
- Economy & Business Class fares
- Net fares and published
- Commissions

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Egypt see page 71 of the Listings Section

sti travel

The Right Way to Egypt

8 DAYS/6 NIGHTS
INCLUDES 3NTS CAIRO & 3NTS NILE CRUISE
FROM \$999 PP

800-570-0304 • info@sti-travel.com

CLIA, IATA, AITA, NTA, IATAN

reservations egypt

Call toll free 800-381-4896 info@reservationsegypt.com

YOUR ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR TRAVEL TO EGYPT!
Specializing in customized packages (FITs)
Pre-Packaged Tours • Diving Packages • A-La-Carte Arrangements Available:
Sightseeing, Transfers, Hotels, Nile Cruises & Air Only.

CALL FOR NET FARES TO CAIRO INCLUDING DOMESTIC U.S. ADD-ONS.

The Shifting Sands and Seas of Dubai

A colleague who has fallen in love with Dubai recently said that a half hour in Dubai is like two years in any other place, meaning things change by the moment, by the hour. So even a photo of Dubai could be suspect unless transmitted instantly to your computer. However, some developments have taken time to put into place, below is a summary of industry news that affects agents booking Dubai for their clients. Additionally, the region is one of the latest development hotspots on the globe.

On the Ground

FIT wholesaler **Travel Bound** (TB) recently announced it would dip its toe into the Middle East market starting with Dubai. "A trip to Dubai will dazzle even your most well-traveled independent travel clients who think they've seen everything," said Nico Zenner, TB's general manager. "The startling contrast between atmospheric Arab markets and Bedouin culture on the one hand, and 21st century over-the-top architecture with unique attractions like sand skiing on the other, makes it one of the most memorable destinations you can recommend."

TB has added 10 newly built five-star hotels and 12 new sightseeing tours in Dubai, one of the hottest new destinations for independent travelers, with its spectacular new architecture, wide range of sports and adventure travel attractions, and shopping in traditional Arab *souks* or multi-story shopping malls.

Among the properties TB will be employing in Dubai City are Le Meridien, Grand Millennium, InterContinental, Shangri-La and Raffles; while in Jumeirah Beach, the properties include Tamani Marina, Westin, Atlantis the Palm, and the The Harbour.

Rates at Travel Bound's 20 five-star properties in Dubai are as low as \$91 per person per night, and seven hotels have limited time "bonus night" offers. Dubai hotels and sightseeing tours may be booked on www.booktravelbound.com

More Splash

As if Dubai's hotel inventory needed more luxury and splash, the Dubai-based international hotel management group known as the **Jumeirah Group** encompasses the world renowned Burj Al Arab, the world's most luxurious hotel, the multi-award winning Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, Madinat Jumeirah and Jumeirah Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa in Dubai, the Jumeirah Carlton Tower and Jumeirah Lowndes Hotel in London and the Jumeirah Essex House in N.Y.

Within the region, several properties are being developed, namely the Jumeirah Al Salam Resort in Bahrain and Jumeirah Al Salam Yiti Resort in Oman, which are scheduled to open in 2010. Jumeirah Al Salam Resort in Southern Bahrain will consist of a 293-room hotel, seven hotel villas (divisible into 56 guest rooms and 21 suites), 33 spa suites and a large convention center. The prestigious resort is located on 300 meters of private beach and will also offer one indoor and three outdoor swimming pools, eight restaurants and bars and extensive business and spa facilities. Jumeirah Al Salam Yiti Resort is located just south of Muscat and will comprise of a 202-room hotel and 148



chalets. The well-appointed resort will also feature five restaurants and bars, banqueting and conference facilities, swimming pool, fitness center, tennis courts and Talise Wellness spa. Visit www.jumeirah.com

On the Seas

More and more cruise lines are calling at Dubai's Cruise Terminal, another wonder on the tourism map as it sprawls about 9,900 square feet right on the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf. Straddling two berths in Port Rashid, the terminal's facilities can handle two ships simultaneously. Its deep basin gives cruise lines the option of bringing in larger ships and in winters, the waters around Port Rashid are quiet and calm.

Dubai's homeport represents the final resting place for the Queen Elizabeth 2. **Cunard's Queen Elizabeth 2** made her final departure from her homeport of Southampton last month to her new home in Dubai where she will become a first-class hotel and entertainment center.

QE2 has traveled nearly six million nautical miles, more than any ship ever; has carried 2.5 million guests; has completed 25 World Cruises; and has crossed the Atlantic 804 times. Call 800-7-CUNARD; www.cunard.com

Royal Caribbean International recently announced a seven-night roundtrip itinerary for its inaugural season from its homeport of Dubai. Vacationers can choose among 13 sailings, from January through April 2010, aboard Brilliance of the Seas to some of the most exciting and vibrant destinations in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman. Royal Caribbean's Dubai cruises are now open for booking.

Guests aboard Brilliance of the Seas' cruises from Dubai will have ample time to explore the famed city with overnight stays at the beginning and conclusion of the voyage. The port-intensive itinerary will also include a call at Oman's capital of Muscat, and maiden ports of call at Mina Sulman, Bahrain; and Fujairah and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

Vacationers also can choose among two repositioning cruises, both 14-night itineraries, between Barcelona and Dubai via the Suez Canal. The January 4, 2010 sailing from Barcelona will call at Aqaba, Jordan and three Egyptian ports: Alexandria, Safaga, and Sharm El Sheikh. The April 19 return voyage will call at Safaga, Sharm El Sheikh, Alexandria and Muscat. Agents can call 800-327-2056; www.cruisingpower.com

For more information, contact the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, www.dubaitourism.ae

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Dubai see page 72 of the Listings Section

IN THE NEWS

Kenya Airways launches new non-stop flights

Kenya Airways (KQ) recently launched non-stop flights to Antananarivo, Madagascar and projected the route will increase the airline's load factor. "We are looking at a 65 to 70 percent rise of the load factor in the next year or so, by using the 737s that carry an average of 120 passengers," said Titus Naikuni, the KQ CEO.

The move is part of the airline's strategy of connecting the French-speaking Indian Ocean Islands of Madagascar, Seychelles, Comoros and Mayotte to Paris, Europe and West Africa, via Nairobi. Naikuni said the airline will start with two weekly flights on Tuesdays and Thursdays and add a third frequency every Saturday, beginning December 2008.

The ultimate goal for KQ is to enable people traveling within the continent to reach their destination through a maximum of one connection. Naikuni also said KQ will leverage on their code-share agreement with Air Madagascar, which flies non-stop to Nairobi a similar number of times, in order to achieve a seamless service almost the entire week.

The Madagascar service comes on the heels of KQ's new non-stop flights to Guangzhou, China, on October 28, 2008. The 12-hour flights to Guangzhou will operate on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Guangzhou is a major shopping destination for merchants from Africa, who connect through

Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA).
Call 866 536 9224; www.kenya-airways.us

Monet Launches 2009 Season on Red Sea

Elegant Cruises & Tours, a niche cruise line specializing in culturally focused travel, is pleased to announce its new 2009 itineraries for the 104-passenger M.S. Andrea and the 62-passenger M.S. Monet.

The Monet (above) kicks-off her 2009 season in the Red Sea, exploring the Gulf of Aqaba and introducing guests to the ancient Christian monasteries and relics of the vast Egyptian desert, and visiting Petra and Amman. The Monet then repositions to Venice, home port for her classic spring and summer voyages through the Adriatic. Sailing round-trip from Venice, passengers will visit the culturally rich cities, enchanting islands dotting the Dalmatian coast and lesser known ports of Croatia and Slovenia

"Our goal is always to keep our itineraries fresh by including elements of surprise and by visiting lesser known ports of call as well as the iconic cultural capital cities that every traveler wants to experience," according to Captain Mato Stanovic, founder and president of Elegant Cruises & Tours.

Call 800-683-6767; E-mail info@elegantcruises.com; www.elegantcruises.com

BEST BUYS

\$1499 DUBAI

From a sleepy trading port to a global gateway in 25 years, the Middle East metropolis of Dubai has sprung up out of the desert sands. **STI Travel** offers a variety of FIT and escorted tours ranging from our two nights White Flamingo Tour to the seven-night Arabian Adventure Tour. Dubai is widely known for its superb accommodations, from golf and water sports to desert safaris and traditional dhow cruises. Book the four-night Dubai and Abu Dhabi program by Dec. 31 to assure clients get this best buy at \$1,499 per person double for accommodations, with daily buffet breakfast, transfers, a dhow dinner cruise, a city tour in Dubai, an Abu Dhabi tour with lunch, an excursion to Heritage Village

Call 800-570-0304; www.sti-travel.com

\$1999 TUNISIA

Tunisia Camels Adventure and exploration are here for the taking for those who join **Gate 1 Travel's** 11-day Tunisia tour. The tour features stays in Tunis, Tabarka, Tozeur, Djerba, Sousse, and Hammamet and highlights include visits to the ancient ruins of Carthage, the Bardo and Dar Cherait Museums, and the island of Djerba. Optional tours include an excursion via camelback. There are 14 departures for this tour in 2009: from January 15 to December 24. The tour is priced from \$1,999 land and air (per person based on double occupancy) if booked by December 12, 2008 or from \$2,199 if booked thereafter and depending upon date of departure. Call 800-682-3333; E-mail info@gate1travel.com

DUBAI

Emirati Falcon From \$1,499pp

5 Days - 4 Nights

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 4 nights accommodation in sharing double / Twin Room with daily Buffet Breakfast
- Meet & assist at Dubai Airport
- Transfers Airport - Hotel - Airport
- All tours per itinerary
- English speaking guide
- Dhow Dinner Cruise
- Half Day Dubai City Tour
- Heritage Village
- Abu Dhabi Tour with Lunch
- East Coast Tour with Lunch

10% COMMISSION

800-570-0304
info@sti-travel.com

Limited space: Dubai Fam Trip January 20-28 2009: \$3135 pp

Holidays Across the USA

Whether the Dow is melting down or rebounding the holidays will not stop for anyone. Below are a few deals that may spread some good cheer among clients.

PENNSYLVANIA: **Bedford Springs Resort:** After 21 years behind closed doors, the recently reopened Bedford Springs Resort, is creating a few new holiday traditions this year. A special holiday package includes deluxe accommodations for two (children stay free in the parents' room; maximum four people per room), a complimentary holiday welcome gift and a s'mores kit to enjoy by the crackling outdoor fire pit. Rates range from \$250 per room, per night, for 2 Turtle Doves (two nights), \$225 for 4 Calling Birds (four nights) and \$195 for 6 Geese A-Laying (six nights). Call 866-623-8719; www.bedfordspringsresort.com

COLORADO: **The Brown Palace Hotel:** A time-honored tradition is Breakfast with Santa and Mrs. Claus, complete with an elf-sized buffet to tempt even the smallest guests, photo with St. Nick himself and music from the North Pole (Dec. 6, 13 and 20; reservations required).

The Brown Palace's two holiday packages offer deluxe accommodations and plenty of pampering. Winter Wonderland features a 50-minute couples' massage with peppermint massage oil, a 20-minute Artesian Plunge in peppermint bath tea, and parking, and starts at \$440. Sleigh Bells in the City includes a 30-minute horse-drawn carriage ride, couples' pedicure, hot chocolate and cookie turndown and parking, starting at \$325. Both are available through March 31, Thursday through Sunday. Call 800-321-2599 www.brownpalace.com

CALIFORNIA: **Huntington Hotel & Nob Hill Spa:** While creating plenty of holiday magic for its own guests, The Huntington Hotel, a member of Preferred Hotels® & Resorts, keeps the true spirit of the season in mind by reaching out to children in need. For every Bloomingdale's Shoppers Package, Romance Package and Romance & Relaxation Package booked and fulfilled now through December 30, 2008, \$10 per room night will be donated to Raphael House, an organization dedicated to helping at-risk children and their families achieve stable housing and financial independence.

Packages start at \$425 and include amenities ranging from spacious accommodations to a bottle of sparkling wine and a treatment at the hotel's Nob Hill Spa. The hotel's annual Huntington Park Treelighting Ceremony has become a Nob Hill tradition, drawing hotel guests and the community together to kick-off the holiday season with hot chocolate and cider provided by The Big 4 restaurant at the Huntington. Call 800-227-4683; www.huntingtonhotel.com

WEST VIRGINIA: **The Greenbrier:** This grand resort, a member of Preferred Hotels & Resorts and Historic Hotels of America, is known for its grand display each holiday season, with thousands of poinsettias and Christmas greenery decking the halls, a Jingle Bell Parade led by Santa, hot chocolate and cookies nightly, holiday storytelling, concerts, authors' visits and more. And then there's the spectacular 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Gingerbread Ball and Dinner Party, with Santa himself as the guest of honor. A Christmas Comes Early package includes a



VAL RESORTS

\$100 credit per room towards holiday shopping or resort activities. Rates start at \$329 per room, per night. Call 800-453-4858; www.greenbrier.com

FLORIDA: **Amelia Plantation**

Announced its newest package, Family Value Days. Created with the economy in mind, this package offers families and couples a fun, affordable getaway.

This promotion includes accommodations, kids and family recreation, complimentary meals for children when ordering from the children's menu (including Thanksgiving and Christmas buffets), and free golf and tennis for juniors when playing with a paying adult.

The package rate of \$269 per night is based on a spacious, two bedroom resort-view villa. Other room types are available. Offer is good through April 30, 2009, and must be booked by January 31, 2009. Call 866-213-8045; use promo code FAMILY for online bookings, www.aipfl.com

NEW YORK: **The Sagamore, Bolton Landing**

Located in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains, the historic Sagamore invites guests to start their own holiday traditions including the New Year's Eve Party.

From December 30, 2008 to New Year's Day, January 1, 2009 guests can enjoy two-night accommodations. This package includes New Year's Eve dinner as well as a 60's inspired gala party featuring the Liverpool Legends with a midnight toast. Over indulged just a wee bit on New Years Eve? Not to worry, as part of the New Years package, guests will awake to enjoy a New Year's Day Recovery Brunch. Both packages offer breakfast daily and start at \$395 per person. The Sagamore is an official landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a member of Historic Hotels of America.

Call 800-358-3585; www.thesagamore.com

UTAH: **Sundance Resort, Sundance:** Great powder isn't the only thing the Utah Mountains offer in the winter time! Nestled below 12,000-foot Mount Timpanogos, Sundance Resort, a member of Preferred Boutique™, is the perfect place for celebrating time-honored traditions or starting new ones. Families will enjoy the incredible array of indoor options and outdoor activities including art classes, film screenings, jewelry making, snowshoeing, skiing, and snowboarding. The resort's Holiday Package includes daily breakfast, two activity vouchers per person, and two 60-minute Four Winds Massages (total) at the Spa at Sundance. The package starts at \$1,884 for a three-night stay, double occupancy. Call 800-892-1600; www.sundanceresort.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to USA
see page 50-51 of the Listings Section

BEST BUYS

\$169 CALIFORNIA

Extend the holidays with friends and family this season, with **The Portofino Hotel & Yacht Club's** "Home For the Holidays Package." This picture-perfect coastal gem, convenient to Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Disneyland and Universal Studios, is the perfect place for a cozy holiday celebration. The Home For The Holidays Package includes one night's accommodations, a bottle of Port wine, and divine, decadent Godiva chocolate truffles at turn-down. The package is attractively priced starting at \$169 per night for marina-side rooms and \$209, ocean side. The package is available November through January 31, 2009 and is based on space availability. Call 800-468-4292 or E-mail reservations@hotelportofino.com

\$1240 FLORIDA

Billed as "high touch not high tech," **Little Palm Island** does not offer televisions, phones, Wi-Fi or radios in the suites. Guests are encouraged not to use cell phones or wireless devices in public spaces and may leave them in the suite or check them at the wireless check in at Shore Station. Little Palm Island Resort & Spa invites guests to unplug with the Escape getaway, which includes: a night in a Bungalow Suite; a chilled bottle of champagne; all non-alcoholic beverages and mini-bar items; full breakfast each morning; a \$100 spa credit, per person per day; complimentary valet parking. The Escape getaway starts at \$1,240.

Call 800-3-GET-LOST; www.littlepalmisland.com.

\$139 HAWAII

The Wyland Waikiki, Hawaii's only art-design hotel in the heart of Waikiki is offering a Double Upgrade Special is valid through December 31, 2008, and includes a double category room upgrade and daily full American breakfast for two from the hotel's new Spada Restaurant. The City View Room rates start from \$139 per night.

Call 866-346-4679; WylandWaikiki.com

\$3240 MONTANA

Triple Creek Ranch, Montana's Relais & Châteaux hideaway in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana, is offering a 20% discount on three all-inclusive, five-day/four-night packages in January and February 2009. Romantic Paradise in the Mountains of Montana, priced at \$3,420 per couple Feb. 5 – 17 and 20 – 28, 2009; Winter Snowmobile Adventure Special priced at \$4,200 per couple on the following dates: Jan. 3 – 13, 2009, and Jan. 24 – Feb. 17 and Feb. 20 – 28, 2009; and Ski the Mountains of Montana, priced at \$3,320 per couple on the following dates: January 3 – 13, 2009, January 24 – February 17 and February 20 – 28, 2009

For extra nights, room rates are also discounted 20% during January 3 – 13, 2009; January 24 – February 17, 2009; and February 20 – 28, 2009). Guests can extend their stay at the rate of \$760 per couple, per night, inclusive of all meals, snacks and beverages and use of all on-ranch facilities. Call 800-654-2943; E-mail info@triplecreekranch.com; www.triplecreekranch.com

\$199 NEW MEXICO

Eldorado Hotel & Spa is picking up the tab and giving guests a free night's stay. Travelers who book a three-night stay receive the third night free, a \$200 value! Valid now through Dec. 21, 08, this special offer, representing a 33% discount, is perfect for a last-minute summer getaway or a fall southwest retreat. Rates start at \$199 per night.

Guests can also tantalize taste buds at Eldorado's Hotel & Spa's award-winning, four-diamond The Old House restaurant. Call 800-955-4455, mention PROSTA when booking.

\$139 NEW JERSEY

The Heldrich, New Brunswick's sophisticated new luxury hotel located in the city's cultural center announces its new Stay-with-Us Leisure Vacation Packages for the fall and winter. The Heldrich is located on "theatre row" in New Jersey's thriving restaurant and theater city – New Brunswick. Bed & Breakfast packages start at \$139 for one night Thurs.-Sun. Living Large on Livingston includes two tickets to a show at the State Theater, overnight stays and \$100 dinner credit for use in Christopher's Restaurant and Bar, priced from \$300 per couple; Weekend Romance starts at \$299 per couple for an overnight on Fri./Sat. nights; while a Girlfriends Getaway starts from \$342 per person double for accommodations, parking, three spa treatments and breakfast. Call 866-609-4700; www.theheldrich.com

15% Commission To Agents

EAGLERIDER
WORLDWIDE TOURS

Rentals
Harley, Honda, BMW

Self-Drive Tours
Hotel, Bike, Routing

Guided Tours
Multi-lingual Guides

www.eaglerider.com • 310-536-6777
Worldwide Locations

Budapest's Lively Arts

By Maria Lisella

Some say a visit to Budapest is love at first sight. Budapest is famous for its romantic bridges that span the Danube, such as Széchenyi Chain Bridge, the Independence Bridge, the Margaret Bridge, and the Elizabeth Bridge. Just stroll along the main bridges for step into the heart of the city: the Danube itself.

Even if your client has not waltzed into your office demanding a trip to Hungary exclusively, any number of river cruises will drop them off for the day. On the strength of a daytrip, I promise you will have a client who will soon look for an opportunity to revisit.

Despite the sharp contrast between the twin cities of Buda and Pest, both radiate the aspirations of past eras. In Pest, you cannot miss the proud neoclassical unity of the buildings, enlivened at intervals by decorative flecks of art nouveau and extravagant eclecticism.

The Danube River divides and also unifies the Hungarian capital – the hills and valleys of Buda from the flatlands of Pest – in separating the two sides of the same coin, visitors can see quickly that the two are in some very integral and intuitive way, inseparable. The view of the bridges spanning the river, the buildings along the banks and the rich culture they represent, are on the list of World Heritage sites. This splendid panorama can be best enjoyed from the Buda hills, the promenade in Pest, or from a private boat on the Danube. From a stalactite cave system, hidden under the hills, 18 million gallons of thermal water gush daily, making Budapest the only city in the world where 50 baths and spas are fed by natural mineral and therapeutic waters.

The mingling of cultures has brought about amphitheatres from the Roman Empire and 16th century Turkish baths, preserved in their original form and still in use. Central Europe's largest Jewish community lives in Hungary, mainly in Budapest, making their traditions, architecture and art forms a valuable part of Hungarian culture. The Great Synagogue is the second largest in the world.

Buda's winding old-world alleyways are lined with colorful Baroque palaces and shallow-domed steam baths built by the Turks during their long occupation. The Neo-Gothic Parliament is one of the city's most decorative structures, characterized by numerous small spikes and stone lace ornamentation. With its



The Chain Bridge straddles Buda & Pest.

magnificent staircase and exquisite reception rooms, the building is one of the largest assemblies in the world.

Budapest's oldest traditional urban district is the Old Jewish Quarter of Pest, which embraces a dense network of fractured and curving streets established in the first half of the 18th century. Among other great architectural structures of Budapest are the Neo-Renaissance Opera House and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as well as the secessionist Gresham Palace.

Budapest took its present form in the 1890s, when – celebrating the 1,000-year anniversary of the foundation of the state – magnificent buildings were erected. Some outstanding examples are: The largest Parliament in Europe located on the Pest side of the city: its 315-foot high dome overlooking the Danube is an impressive sight; the neo-renaissance Opera House: its architectural details harmoniously blend its columns, arcades, woodwork, metalwork and mural decorations; St. Stephen's Basilica: the largest church in the city with a breathtaking view from its dome.

The Budapest Zoo and Botanical Gardens house buildings that are masterpieces of turn-of-the-century Hungarian architecture, which features a spectacular mixture of Hungarian art nouveau and romantic styles with oriental patterns.

The Western Railway Station was designed and constructed by the Eiffel Company of Paris, the huge terminal behind the elegant glass façade is supported by a cast-iron structure. There are 10 different modes of transportation available to discover the city, including the cogwheel railway, funicular, chairlift and the first subway (built in 1896). The two or three-day **Budapest Card** offers visitors free public transportation and free or discounted entry to most museums and other points of interest.

If clients are looking for the intangible values they can take home with them that will add no weight to their suitcases, then be sure to plan ahead to obtain tickets for live performances. Visit the tourist office website for details.

Performing Arts Festivals

One of the most beautiful buildings and main cultural venues in all of romantic Budapest is the Hungarian State Opera House. Furthermore, the newest cultural complex, the Palace of Arts has opened its premises for symphony and concert music, opera and ballet performances. Come here to catch a Hungarian Rhapsody or two by musical giant Franz Liszt, or head for a *tanchaz* (dance house) for an evening of haunting folk music and dance. Below are a few suggestions of festivals that take place annually.

Budapest: Spring Festival, is Hungary's largest and most prestigious cultural festival, featuring more than 200 events staged in 60 venues around the city. Over the years it has grown a country-wide festival; Summer Opera and Ballet Festival, with opera and ballet on stage in the Hungarian State Opera House, the capital's beaux-arts architectural centerpiece; Sziget Festival, a multicultural event: film, jazz, folklore and mostly youth concerts are held on Hajógyar Island. (1st week of August); the Autumn Arts Festival highlighting contemporary art and music (mid-October)

Fertod: Haydn Festival, a week of classical music performance at the Eszterhazy Castle.

Gyor: Summer International Cultural Festival, offering a rich palette of classical and folk music, jazz, dance, theater handicraft and gourmet programs.

Logistics

The choice of hotels in Budapest runs from small to large, old-fashioned to modern, traditional to international chains, such as **Marriott, Intercontinental, Hyatt** and **Hilton**. Also available are spa hotels built on the healing waters of the city that offer an opportunity to be pampered by highly qualified staffs. They say Hungarians have always considered satisfying a visitor's appetite the primary element of hospitality. Hungarian, as well as diverse specialty foods, can be

2009 European Exhibitions

FLORENCE, ITALY: Caterina and Maria de' Medici:

Through February 8, 2009. This exhibition tells of the power of imagery and how images of powerful women were used by the two Medici queens of France to legitimize their rule at a time when women in such positions were rare. It brings to Firenze's fifteen monumental tapestries commissioned by Caterina de' Medici (1519-89) in the mid-16th century and completed by Maria de' Medici (1573-1642) which depict Artemisia of Caria, widow of Mausolus. Further sections of the exhibition expand on the themes depicted by the tapestries as well as studying in depth the character of the two Medici queens, using portraits and works of art loaned from various Firenze's museums.

BELGIUM: Flemish Tapestries from the Burgundian Dukes: Through March 29, 2009 at the Abbey of Saint Peter, Ghent Tapestries made in the 15th and 16th centuries were used as 'mobile frescoes' by the Burgundian dukes Emperor Charles V and King Philip II, accompanying them on their travels through Europe to bring comfort, aesthetic pleasure and social prestige. This exhibition brings together magnificent tapestries from the Spanish royal collection, several Spanish private collections and the 16th century tapestries from St. Peter's Abbey. Important weaving centers such as Brussels, Oudenaarde, Mechelen and Tournai produced splendid weaving patterns often designed by famous painters. www4.gent.be/spa/english

found in Budapest. It is hard to resist the aroma of coffee and cakes as they find their way from ovens to counters in old cafés. Pubs and jazz clubs are becoming very popular, especially on days when live music makes the beer taste even better. Budapest is a city of history, culture, tradition and ambiance in a rapidly changing world. An amazing experience that needs to be experienced now.

For information, contact the Hungarian National Tourist Office, 212-695-1221; E-mail info@gotohungary.com; www.gotohungary.com

SkyLink
The online travel center

Best airfares to HUNGARY

www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

We offer the best:

- Combination of airlines to HUNGARY
- Largest choice of airfares
- Economy & Business Class fares
- Net fares and published
- Commissions

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Hungary
see page 64 of the Listings Section

I'M ITALY by **Donna Franca Tours**

ITALY ON SALE!

CHOOSE: A Taste of Rome, Florence, Venice, Sorrento, Palermo or Taormina.

from **\$549** p.p. dbl. occ.

4 or 5 Nights Air & Land Package from Boston, New York, Newark. Upgrades to first class and deluxe hotels are available.

Italy on Sale is free, easy, affordable—as you like it.

For reservations or more information please call toll-free 800-225-6290 (617-375-9400 for local calls).

800-225-6290 www.donnafranca.com
donnafranca@donnafranca.com | 470 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215

THE 3 CITIES OF CULTURE Fully Hosted: **9 Days/ 8 Nights** from **\$2399** p.p. dbl. occ. Air/Land package, from Boston, New York, Newark. **Rome** (3 nts), Naples, Pompeii, **Florence** (3nts), Siena, San Gimignano, Verona, **Venice** (2 nts). Accommodations in first class centrally located hotels, with buffet breakfast & dinner with wine included.

SICILIAN FEVER Fully Hosted: **9 Days/ 8 Nights** from **\$2189** p.p. dbl. occ. Air/Land package, from Boston, New York, Newark. **Palermo** (2 nts.), Monreale, Segesta, Marsala, **Agirigento** (1 nt), Piazza Armerina, **Syracuse** (2 nts), **Taormina** (3 nts), Mt. Etna. Accommodations in first class centrally located hotels, with buffet breakfast and dinner with wine included.

A TASTE OF MALTA Independent: **7 Days/5 Nights** — from **\$1499** p.p. dbl. occ. First class or deluxe air & land package from Boston, New York, Newark. 5 Nights accommodations in a sea view room, with buffet breakfast and dinner daily. Roundtrip transfers to the airport by private car and a choice of one full day excursion with lunch included.

LOT

POLAND ?

WE CAN GET IT FOR YOU WHOLESALE!

As America's #1 tour operator to Poland since 1946, we have an in, whatever you may require. GROUP TRAVEL, HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS, CAR RENTALS, FLY/DRIVE PROGRAMS, SPA VACATIONS, FITS, INCENTIVES, CONSOLIDATOR AIR TICKETS ON LOT POLISH AIRLINES (THE ONLY NON-STOP TO WARSAW & KRAKOW FROM 5 U.S. GATEWAYS)

ORDER FREE 2008 BROCHURES AT: WWW.AMTA.COM

CALL TODAY: 800-228-0877

AMERICAN TRAVEL ABROAD

TOLL-FREE: 800-228-0877
FAX: 212-361-7929 • WWW.AMTA.COM
935 8AVENUE, NEW YORK NY 10018

LOT

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.LOT.COM

Barcelona's Fusion Culture

By Maria Lisella

It is no secret that many visitors to Spain think of Barcelona as distinct from Spain, which does not make it less Spanish but does underscore its fierce independence – and the Catalans like it that way. With its own language and traditions, Barcelona looks out to the sea, earning a reputation for being cosmopolitan and worldly compared to Spain's landlocked capital of Madrid. Its history of trade and commerce, industry and eccentricities, make Barcelona a first-rate city to visit for a week, all on its own. Its architectural gems alone could keep visitors walking and craning their necks for days on end.

If your clients have not visited Barcelona in a long time, send them there as soon as you can. Even someone who has visited before will see it as if for the first time. The "new" Barcelona's parameters have spread into the sea. Land has been reclaimed which stretches with sandy beaches that have earned the bright blue EC flag indicating cleanliness and safety. Much of this land was once forgotten when heavy industry left the area.

If the thought of dining alfresco on sublime seafood while looking out over the Atlantic does not appeal to your client, take them back into the Gothic quarter where Barcelona's heart beats. Street musicians, off-beat entertainment and small specialty shops huddle in the alleyways that beckon you to step inside. The shop windows, displays and wares are organized like small museums. Visitors will find the makings of a cool drink called horchata here, and take the ingredients home to replicate their Spanish experience.

Like so much of what makes Barcelona, a new entertainment attraction on Las Ramblas, called Opera Flamenco, is a fusion of Spanish operetta with flamenco in a single performance. Staged at the Teatre Poliorama, which is located in the heart of Barcelona's famous Rambla, and at the Palau de la Música (Petit Palau), an art-nouveau building, listed on UNESCO World Heritage sites. Opera Flamenco has been running for four years – it takes the spirit of gypsy dance and melds it with Spanish music and opera, from Bizet's impassioned Carmen to the spellbinding staccato rhythms of flamenco. Seeing this at the Palau de la Musica would provide an additional treat, as it would to see it in Petit Palau.

Even if clients do not make it to the show, do be sure they visit the theater and have a coffee in its new café and if they have time, to take one of the frequent tours of the theater that is one of the most fantastically imaginative indoor spaces one can visit. With its 3-D decorations jutting out of the walls, it is as if the walls could speak out loud. Call 011 [34] 932 853 832; or purchase tickets on line. www.bcnshop.barcelonaturisme.com

The four-star Hotel Fira Palace is a Summit Hotel and Resort in the Preferred Hotel Group. With comfortable and spacious guestrooms, the property is within a 15-minute walk of attractions, such as the architectural masterpiece the Casa Batlló, a major Catalan landmark, and is situated



Gaudi's Sagrada Familia in Barcelona

TOURIST OFFICE OF SPAIN

between the famous Plaza de España and Gran Vía Avenue. Although well-located, it is on a quiet street in a residential area. It is also close to Montjuïc.

Rates on certain dates in early winter are under 100 Euros a night or about \$120. E-mail reception@fira-palace.com; www.fira-palace.com

Air Deal in Early Winter

Iberia is offering special round-trip fares from the U.S. to Spanish and other European destinations. For instance, there are flights from Washington, D.C. to 13 cities in Europe, including Paris, Rome, Milan, Frankfurt, Vienna or Lisbon starting at \$589. A return flight from Boston to London can cost as little as \$499, while the cheapest fare from Chicago to the Spanish capital or Barcelona costs \$660. This offer is valid for tickets purchased on www.iberia.com until Jan. 1; travel must conclude by Jan. 31, 2009. For information on Barcelona, visit www.barcelonaturisme.com

For general information, contact the Tourist Office of Spain in New York, 212-265-8822; Miami, 305-358-1992; Chicago, 312-642-1992 or Los Angeles, 323-658-7195; www.spain.info

SkyLink
The Airline Ticket Center

Best airfares to SPAIN

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

We offer the best:

- Combination of airlines to SPAIN
- Largest choice of airfares:
- Economy & Business Class fares
- Net fares and published
- Commissions

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Spain
see page 68 of the Listings Section

Malta's Historic Tempo

Clients visiting Malta will travel 7,000 years of history yet live passionately in the present. You'll span the millennia with an astonishing array of things to discover. And wherever you go, the Islands' scenery and architecture provide a spectacular backdrop. Its colors are striking, honey-colored stone against the deepest of Mediterranean blues in a country that boasts nearly 365 days of sunshine.

The Maltese Islands have been described as one big open-air museum. What makes them unique is that so much of their past is visible today. Even on a superficial tour, visitors can delve into the islands' mysterious prehistory, retrace the footsteps of St. Paul or see where the Knights of St. John defended Christendom.

The capital city of Valletta hosts live performances of plays and concerts, as well as scores of exhibitions and street events. The Museum of Archaeology in Valletta houses an exceptionally rich collection of prehistoric artifacts. The War Museum at Fort St. Elmo is home to a Sunday military parade in period costumes re-enactment and the capital also possesses the impressive Grand Master's Palace and St. John's Co-cathedral.

Additionally, the Megalithic Temples (including Ggantija, the oldest freestanding temple in the world), the underground St. Paul's and St. Agatha's catacombs, The Knights of St. John's significant sites, such as Fort St. Angelo and Fort Rinella (home to the world's largest cannon). WWII significant sites, such as the Mgarr war shelter, Mtarfa ex-British military buildings, The Armoury and the Maritime Museum in Vittoriosa are not to be missed. Nor are the Carnivals in Valletta and the Nadur carnival in Gozo, one of the main islands of Malta.

While Malta is the largest island and the cultural, commercial and administrative center, Gozo is the second largest island and is more rural, characterized by fishing, tourism, crafts and agriculture while Comino is largely uninhabited.

Likewise, the Islands offer plenty of special interest holidays for those seeking to learn a new skill, discover history or get fit. If clients are interested in sports, Malta can cater to the amateur athlete as well as the casual first-timer. Malta has wellness and spa facilities at the luxury hotels and club resorts. Sea and land lend themselves to activities from rock-climbing to gentle rambling. For a change from Malta itself, hop to the sister islands of Gozo and Comino.

FIT Tours Creates Maltese Webcast

The Embassy of Malta, in D.C. and Foreign Independent Tours are promoting travel to this exquisite Mediterranean Jewel. Says Diane Panasci, head of Marketing and Product Development at Foreign Independent Tours, "We are sponsoring the year-long webcast which starts with the 'Caravaggio and the Knights of Malta: a 400-Year Perspective,'" which began airing on Oct. 28, 2008 and will continue for a year. "Hopefully, the placement of this webcast will lead people to see our seven standard packages to Malta and of



Valletta

MALTA INFO-POINT BLANK

course we want to let agents know we are able to help them sell this delightful country to their price conscious travelers," she adds.

To kick off the company's foray into Malta, a seven-day tour, the Art and Temples of Malta, is priced from \$1,499 per person and will remain valid through Oct., 2009.

The price covers roundtrip airfare from NY-JFK, Boston or Washington Dulles to Malta, roundtrip transfers, five nights' accommodations at **The Palace Hotel** in Sliema, breakfast daily, half day tour in Valletta and a full day tour of the Blue Grotto and Temples. Call 800-248-3487; www.fittours.com

For more information on Malta, visit www.visitmalta.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Malta
see page 66 of the Listings Section

MALTA 7000 YEARS OF HISTORY

Experience the Jewel of the Mediterranean



Malta à la Carte
7 Days From **\$1199** thru April 2009
An Independent Tour of Malta
Create Your Own Package

Includes: RT Air from JFK, Washington Dulles or Boston add just \$60 to fly from Detroit \$80 from Miami or Orlando and \$100 from LAX or San Francisco. RT Transfers. 5 Nights at the Victoria Hotel Sliema, Malta. Breakfast Daily. WiFi Internet Connection throughout the Hotel



Art and Temples of Malta
7 Days From **\$1499**
Departures Thru October 2009

A New Package with 5* Palace Hotel and Sight-seeing including RT Air JFK, Boston or Washington Dulles to Malta. RT transfers airport to hotel in Malta. 5 Nights stay in the Palace Hotel, Deluxe Room with Balcony or Terrace. Breakfast Daily. Half Day tour Valletta and Malta Experience. Full day tour Blue Grotto And Temples. Fuel Surcharge

Exploring the Maltese Archipelago
7 Days From **\$1599** Thru March 2009

Malta & Gozo + Full Day Tour of Sicily!
Price reduced! Includes: RT Air from JFK, Boston or Washington Dulles add just \$60 to fly from Detroit \$80 from Miami or Orlando and \$100 from LAX or San Francisco. Fuel Surcharge. 5 Nights at the Golden Tulip Vivaldi. Full Day Gozo Experience. Full Day Trip to Sicily. Choice Half Day tour of Mdina, Valletta or Blue Grotto. Breakfast Daily. All transportation, taxi & ferry needed for the itinerary.



FOREIGN INDEPENDENT TOURS



Ancient Mystique...A Lifetime of Memories

800-248-3487 | www.fittours.com

EUROPE

Planning a Fabulous Weekend in London

By Chantal Guillou Brennan

I arrived at St. Pancras Train Station in London from Paris after a two hour ride on the Eurostar. With only two days to spare in London, I wanted to see as much as possible. After settling quickly at the close by **Russell Hotel**, I made my way, via cab to the **London Eye**.

The Eye (as the locals call it) is a giant ferris wheel looming over the Thames near Waterloo Station. A flight on the Eye lasts about 30 minutes, taking you to a height of 135 metres for a 40km panoramic view, on a clear day, offering stunning views of London and its famous landmarks. The difficult choice is whether to visit during the day when landmarks are most visible, or after dark for a truly spectacular vista of London's lights. The London Eye, River Cruise and its facilities are all accessible for guests with special needs. (£13.95 adult and £6.95 child). For group rates E-mail groups@londoneye.com or visit www.londoneye.com.

After this quick preview of London's spectacular historic landmarks from the Eye, I was anxious to take a more in-depth ride on **The Original Tour** bus scheduled for the next morning.

Although the tube is an inexpensive and easy mode of



BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY

CHANTAL GUILLLOU-BRENNAN

transportation (daily pass for about \$16) I opted for a cab ride to enjoy London on my way to Trafalgar Square where one can catch all six (color coded) Original Tour bus routes, as well as their three guided walking tours.

The Original Tour bus is "brilliant"—a marvel of organization—and a superb way to visit the best of London at your leisure on an open-top bus. They also offer speciality tours and cruises, plus attraction tickets through their box office.

The (24 hour) daily pass can be booked in advance online or purchased on the street for about \$4 more per person. With your ticket in hand, you can hop on and off all routes as often as you wish, including a free Thames River cruise that you can also take at your leisure, as well as the free walking tours and free Kids Club.

Walk in the foot steps of Jack the Ripper through notorious Whitechapel or chill out on the Cool Britannia walk (music, movies, fashion, food) or take in a bit of tradition at the Changing of the Guard with English commentary. You can stop at the Sherlock Holmes Pub for a tasty meal or schedule your afternoon tea break at the Café in the Crypt.

I enjoyed the sights while learning from the excellent commentaries in many languages (red route) and a live, entertaining guide (yellow route). Plus, the Museum route included a stop at Russell Square which I used to get back to my hotel.

Whether you're visiting London for the first time or not, and truly want to experience this legendary city, both the **London Eye** and **The Original Tour** bus offer an unforgettable experience. E-mail info@theoriginaltour.com or visit www.theoriginaltour.com

Visit www.visitbritain.com and www.visitlondon.com.

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Britain see page 60 of the Listings Section

Experience Europe, with...

EUROPEAN TOURS

GREECE AUSTRIA FRANCE GERMANY SPAIN ITALY SWITZERLAND TURKEY U.K.



FIT's • Groups • Car Rentals • Honeymoons
Worldwide Hotel Accommodations • River Cruises
Greek and Mediterranean Cruises • Rail Tickets and Passes.

800-882-3983
info@europtours.com
www.europtours.com



BEST BUYS

\$1119 EUROPE Gate 1 Travel offers one of the most affordable ways to vacation in Europe in 2009 – cruising the Danube, Main, and Rhine Rivers aboard their two specially commissioned luxury ships, the MS Royal and the MS Symphony. Gate 1 Travel also offers Ukrainian River Cruises aboard the MS Shevchenko.

Gate 1 Travel's luxury river cruises for target travelers looking for a more sophisticated cruise. The River Cloud and The River Cloud II offer the best of European style and grace and are available for several of Gate 1 Travel's itineraries. Rates for the Danube River Cruises start at \$1,199 for land only and \$1,859 for air and land. Rates for the Main and Rhine River Cruises start at \$1,299 for land only and \$1,879 for air and land. Rates for the Ukrainian River Cruise start at \$1,299 for land only and \$2,309 for air and land.

Prices are per person, based on double occupancy and round-trip air from New York City. (Other gateways are available). Call 800-682-3333 E-mail: info@gate1travel.com; www.gate1travel.com

\$4200 FRANCE Go Barging announced the addition of exclusive chartered wine tasting cruises on all its barges in France as part of the itinerary for the 2009 season. Renowned wine expert Brendan Moore will take guests on an exciting and enlightening exploration of the country's premiere wine producing regions, including Burgundy and the South of France.

Tours feature meetings with traditional wine making families, visits to private cellars, and barrel tastings. Prices for chartering a wine cruise start at \$4,200 per person, based on an 8-person charter, and vary depending on the size of the vessel. Go Barging offers a total of 12 cruise itineraries in France. These sophisticated cruises feature a relaxing pace, luxury accommodations, and gourmet dining. Among eligible vessels are the elegant 12-passenger barges, La Belle Époque, Anjodi and L'Impressioniste which tour the striking countryside of Burgundy and Southern France. Call 800-394-8630; www.gobarging.com

\$1779 FINLAND Nordique Tours magical and adventuresome Polar Safari Tour enables visitors to witness the spectacular Northern Lights, steer a reindeer pulled sledge, learn Lapland customs and culture, meet Santa Claus, participate in an Arctic Crossing ceremony during safari and venture out on an icebreaker for a one of a kind arctic cruise including a dip in the sea after being outfitted in a warm thermal suit. This special Polar Safari land package, which is four days/ three nights, is priced at \$1,779 per person double and \$2,319 for single travelers. Departure dates begin the 1st of January through April 22, 2009.

The package includes three nights of accommodations, daily breakfast, two lunches, three dinners, all service charges and hotel taxes, four hour cruise on the icebreaker, safari to the Arctic Circle and transfers throughout the itinerary. Call 800-995-7997; www.nordiquetours.com

\$2250 EASTERN EUROPE CIE Tours International is offering a full program of escorted vacations in Eastern Europe. Leading the list is Prague, Vienna & Budapest, an 11-day/9-night/12-meal vacation using first-class hotels. Departures are on Thursdays, March 19 through Oct. 29, 2009 with land-only prices from \$2,250 per person double; including nine nights first class hotel accommodations, breakfasts and three dinners; entertainment such as a Strauss & Mozart Concert in Vienna, an opera and a show in Prague, a walk around Prague's Old Town, and dinner at a typical "csarda" restaurant in Budapest and sightseeing (Royal Castle of Hradcany, St. Vitus Cathedral, Hofburg Palace, St. Stephen's Cathedral, Kunsthistorische Museum, Fisherman's Bastion and Matthias Church; by luxury motorcoach; local taxes, hotel service charges/porterage; deluxe flight bag, ticket wallet. Call 800-CIE-TOUR; www.cietours.com

IN THE NEWS

Discover Central Europe's Brightest Stars

Discover Central Europe's Brightest Stars: eight sparkling and vibrant cities that attract visitors with their great diversity. Namely, these are Berlin, Bratislava, Budapest, Dresden, Munich, Prague, Salzburg, Vienna. Centuries of colorful history have formed the unique character of each city. This is impressively reflected in the quaint and quirky city centers, charming palaces and beautiful gardens, as well as magnificent UNESCO World Heritage sites. Moreover, the rich cultural treasures such as world-renowned classical music, exquisite art as well as outstanding events and delightful culinary experiences underline the long and exciting history and tradition. But the Star Cities also boast of a modern, trend-setting lifestyle, featuring extraordinary architectural styles, a diverse nightlife, fine restaurants, and endless shopping opportunities that invite visitors to a unique travel experience. Visit www.gotocentraleurope.com

Sceptre Offers Agents a Roman Holiday

Sceptre Tours is now offering outstanding trips to Italy. The company's "Roman Holiday" tour package includes round-trip airfare via Alitalia, and six-night accommodations at Rome's Hotel Waldorf. Sceptre Tours also offers a "Gold Package" tour (\$100 per person upgrade) featuring an Imperial Rome motor coach tour and round-trip transfers between the airport and hotel, and a "Platinum Package" (\$300 per person upgrade) which includes an upgrade to the four-star Hotel Diana in addition to the "Gold" features.

For every three bookings an agent makes, Sceptre Tours will refer one back. This referral is a booking, which was made on an agent's behalf and subsequently forwarded to them. With this program, the agent receives the commission and the client's details.

In addition to their "Book Three, Get One Free" offer, Sceptre Tours will support agreed-upon marketing plans with its travel partners, as it has in the past, through print advertising, postcard mailings, collateral, and other marketing materials. Call 800-221-0924; www.SceptreTours.com

Swiss PostBus' Four-Pass Alpine Tour

One of the most stunning PostBus routes is the unique 4-pass tour from Meiringen via Grimsel, Nufenen, Gotthard and Susten and back to Meiringen. You can now enjoy the trip equipped with our audio travel guide. Don your headphones and find out everything you need to know about the marvels of nature: from sagas and tales of the past to glaciers, lakes, gorges and mountain peaks. In short: a running commentary on the passing scenery.

Clients will discover the most spectacular sides of Switzerland! The Route Express Lines travel over stunningly beautiful Alpine passes with views of snow-capped mountain peaks, and through idyllic valleys with charming villages. Visit www.postbus.ch/alps

Eurofly Revisits Rome at \$799

Eurofly's air and land packages to Rome start at \$799 per person double for travel through March 22, 2009. Packages include roundtrip airfare on Eurofly to Rome, fuel surcharge, four nights' accommodations, and breakfast daily. Clients may choose from among the following four-star properties: **GH Beverly Hills**, from \$799; **Hotel Villa Torlonia** from \$899; **Hotel Savoy** from \$999; or the five-star **Ambasciatori Palace**, from \$1,099.

Prices are per person based on double occupancy. Rate includes \$280 fuel surcharge, but does not include US & Foreign taxes/fees up to \$75 including the September 11th Security Fee. The package is valid through March 22, 2009. Single supplement, Business Class upgrade, and Extra Nights available. Seats are limited. All fares and flights times subject to change without notice. All flights are operated in code-share with Meridiana Airlines. Call 800-459-0581; www.euroflyusa.com

Trafalgar Launches Year-Round Discounts

Trafalgar boasts it is offering the widest array of discount programs in the industry. Some of the measures the company has taken to take the edge off a weak dollar and encourage travel includes rewarding repeat clients with extra savings, paying early, booking multiple and the ability to combine programs with other promotional offers.

Trafalgar's Early Payment Discount is a sliding scale that can save passengers 10% for booking and paying in full 12 months prior to departure, 7.5% at 10 months prior, 5% at 7 months prior or 2.5% at four months prior. With information and pricing for almost all of Trafalgar's 2009 tours available now, Trafalgar has seen a significant increase in passengers taking advantage of this program for tours departing through September 2009.

The Trafalgar Travel Club program allows past passengers to save 5% on a tour taken within two years of their prior Trafalgar tour, and passengers booking a Second or Third tour of 8-days or longer in the same year can save an additional 5% on the land portion of those tours.

Family travel is becoming an increasingly important segment of Trafalgar's overall business, and those families traveling with children ages 5 to 17 can save 10% per child with the Young Traveler Discount. Further, Trafalgar's Travel with Family & Friends program offers savings of 5% per person for 5 to 7 persons traveling together, be they family or friends of any age.

Single travelers can take advantage of Trafalgar's nominal Single Supplement values as well as a Guaranteed Room Share program that pairs passengers of the same sex in non-smoking hotel rooms. In the event a suitable match is not available, Trafalgar will offer the room to the single traveler at no extra cost. Visit www.trafalgar.com.



Adventures in London and Beyond

Cruising the Thames in Spring

Travelers looking for an unusual way to explore the English countryside can save 20 percent on direct bookings for the **Magna Carta** before December 31, 2008 for spring vacations in 2009. The Magna Carta is a luxury barge that typically cruises the River Thames from Hampton Court to Henley, but the Captain is more than willing to tailor itineraries for charter groups.

Carrying just eight passengers, a cruise on the Magna Carta is an intimate and exclusive experience. The barge boasts two decks with four luxurious staterooms, each averaging 200 square feet, on the lower deck. Prices begin at \$3,800 per person, based on two passengers sharing a suite. An eight passenger whole-boat charter starts at \$28,200. E-mail Geoffrey Temple, geoffrey@magna-carta.co.uk visit: www.magna-carta.co.uk.

Gilding an English Lilly

VisitBritain, the national tourist office for England, Scotland and Wales, has teamed up with Red Letter Days, the UK's leading experience company, to offer visitors signature British memories. The partnership enables international visitors, as well as corporate groups to buy adrenaline-packed adventures and behind-the-scenes cultural days out. Here are a few samples:

Aston Martin Driving Thrill: Aston Martin represents pure power and finesse. Experience the exhilaration of driving a classic V8 Vintage car with expert instruction on racing lines, driving techniques and handling the car on a racing

track. You'll be driven around the circuit for two to three demo laps before putting the theory into practice behind the wheel. The price is £149 (or approximately \$276).

Beginner's Full Day Golf Lesson With A PGA Pro: Receive expert instruction from PGA professionals at the renowned Marriott Golf Academy. Golf enthusiasts will work on their technique, obtain instruction on different types of swings and play a short game including chipping and putting. The price is £99 (or approximately \$184).

Thames Dinner Cruise and London Eye for One: Take in spectacular views of London in an air-conditioned capsule on the London Eye. Then, board the Bateaux London river cruise to experience breathtaking London views while savoring a four course dinner and enjoying the cabaret entertainment. The price is £99 (or approximately \$184).

Tour Silverstone: Take a behind the scenes tour of the legendary Silverstone Circuit which is often associated with Formula 1. Race car enthusiasts will have a drive workshop tour, visit the race control, secure an up close and personal view of the race track, stop at the winner's podium and take in spectacular views from the landmark BRDC Clubhouse. The price is £35 (or approximately \$65).

Wedgwood Tour, Pottery Class and Lunch For Two: Explore the world of Wedgwood to uncover the history of this legendary fine china company. Fine china enthusiasts will have an opportunity to test their skills at 'throwing a pot' or creating a piece of fine china by working under the direction of skilled craftsman followed by lunch for two. The price is £98 (or approximately \$182). For information call 800-462-2748 or email travelinfo@visitbritain.org.

Now on sale in the USA

Air Astana (KC 465), the national carrier of Kazakhstan has entered ARC, offering ARC agents 5% commission on all Air Astana tickets issued. Air Astana operates a modern fleet of Boeing 767, 757, Airbus 321, 320 from Europe, Asia and Dubai to Almaty, Astana and Atyrau in Kazakhstan.

Connecting flights from the US:

Air Astana has interline agreements with over 70 of the world's leading airlines; including connections to KC hubs from US points with - LH, VS, TK, EK, KL/NW, TG, SU, OZ, KE, AC, UA, OS. Issue on KC-465 paper and claim your 5% commission all the way from the USA. Check your GDS for details.

Welcome to NOMAD CLUB, Air Astana's Frequent Flyer Program

Join the Nomad Club and earn points on all Air Astana flights, which may be used to accumulate free travel. Very frequent flyers may qualify for Silver and Gold cards, which carry even more benefits. For details please visit www.airastana.com/nomadclub.

Air Astana
285 Westside Avenue, Suite 277-278
Jersey City
New Jersey 07305
USA

Toll free: 888 855 1557
Email: usa.sales@airastana.com, usa.reservations@airastana.com

Air Astana passengers can receive 'same day visa' processing from the KZ Embassy in Washington. Call Air Astana toll free on 888.855.1557 for details.

From the heart of Eurasia

www.airastana.com



air astana

500 Years Later, Spanish *Hotel Chains* Find Gold in Mexico...Again!

Doug Cooke CTC and Monique Burns contributed to this article

Five hundred years ago Spanish Conquistadors came to Mexico seeking fortunes in gold. Today, Spanish hoteliers are repeating their ancestor's quest, with one slight twist; they are still seeking fortunes, but the gold they seek is ocean front real estate, and all inclusive resort development is their vision. And by all accounts they have been extremely successful with new resorts coming on line in a steady stream. JAX FAX has had the opportunity to visit several of these resorts over the past few months and meet with the visionaries who are leading this modern day invasion.



Iberostar Grand Hotel Paraiso,

Iberostar Hotels and Resorts

A presence in the Spanish tourism industry since the 1930s, **Iberostar** is moving aggressively into Mexico and throughout the Caribbean. With more than 100 hotels in 15 countries and plans to add another 100 hotels worldwide by 2012, Iberostar spent \$368 million in new development and renovations in 2008, with more than \$231 million spent in Mexico and the Caribbean.

Founded in 1968, the family-owned Iberostar Hotels & Resorts has focused its Mexico development on the Yucatan peninsula—with seven properties on the Riviera Maya, a 75-mile stretch of Caribbean beachfront south of Cancun, and one hotel on the island of Cozumel. Opened in June 2007, the newest property is the Iberostar Grand Hotel Paraiso, a five-star hotel that inaugurates the company's "Grand Collection," or luxury line, of all-inclusives. An adults-only hotel, the Grand Paraiso features 310 suites, a couples-only spa, several pools, a breakfast/lunch/and dinner buffet, and four a la carte restaurants. Guests enjoy such amenities as a pillow menu, Gilchrist & Soames toiletries and 24-hour butler service. There are dine-around privileges at the four other hotels in the Paraiso Beach complex—the Paraiso Beach, Paraiso Del Mar, Paraiso Lindo and Paraiso Maya—and opportunities to play tennis, or golf on the 18-hole championship P.B. Dye course.

In Playa del Carmen, south of Paraiso Beach, Iberostar's first two Riviera Maya properties—Quetzal and Tucan—opened 11 years ago. With a combined total of 700 rooms (including 48 junior suites), the first-class, family-friendly properties are built

around a lush rainforest that shelters monkeys, parrots, giant tortoises and flamingoes. The hotels share an extensive beachfront, three pools, an international buffet and five a la carte restaurants.

Between 2009 and 2010, the company plans to open three properties in Puerto Vallarta: the Playa Mita Beach, the Playa Mita Suites and the Grand Hotel Playa Mita. Looking farther west in 2011, Iberostar will stake its claim in Baja California with a new hotel in the rapidly developing resort of Los Cabos. **For more information, rates or reservations go to www.iberostar.com.**



Sandos Playacar Riviera Hotel

Sandos Hotels and Resorts

Sandos Hotels & Resorts, headquartered in Spain, has four products on the Riviera Maya, Mexico, housed in two resort complexes – Caracol complex, which consists of Sandos Caracol Eco-Resort & Spa and the Select Club Beach Resort & Spa and the Playacar complex containing Sandos Playacar Beach Resort & Spa and the Playacar Riviera Hotel section – and one resort, the Sandos Papagayo Arena Beach Resort & Spa in the Canary Islands. Future openings are planned in Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

The Sandos Playacar Riviera Hotel opened in April 08. Located just behind the Sandos Playacar Beach Club, the Playacar Riviera Hotel is just a 10-minute walk to the beach. It consists of 400 over-sized junior and master suites. Select Club Junior suites (adults-only) feature a sitting area with a sleeper sofa, terrace or balcony, full private bathroom with a Jacuzzi and separate shower, and a satellite plasma television. Each guestroom has a complimentary stocked mini-bar with mineral water, fruit juices, soft drinks and beer. Master Suites also feature a private Jacuzzi on the balcony overlooking the pool area.

Select Club guests at both the Riviera and beach Club enjoy special amenities including: a private beach with upgraded chaises, beach beds and waiter service, a private specialty restaurant, premium in room minibar drinks, free internet access and 24/7 room service. Select club membership is automatic for guests staying in upgraded Select Club rooms and a nominal \$25/pp/per day for other guests.

Guests at the Playacar Complex can choose from a variety of

Everyday at Sandos is another awesome day for family bonding.

Here at Sandos we love kids! That's why our hotels have become greatly known for bringing out the young spirit and energy in everyone! Regardless of their age, whether you want to share the excitement of a water polo tournament, or just relax under the sun, while the little ones have a blast, our devoted team will be there, to make sure everyone in the family comes home filled with unforgettable memories!

SANDOS
HOTELS & RESORTS

Sandos Caracol • Sandos Select Club • Sandos Playacar • Sandos Playacar Riviera • Sandos Papagayo Arena – Spain • Sandos Monaco – Spain • Sandos Punta Cana*

*Opening soon

For more information and reservations call 1 866 887 5601 or visit us at www.sandoshotels.com

SOUTH & CENTRAL AMERICA

dining options during mealtime including four buffet restaurants serving Italian, Mexican and International fare, and four specialty restaurants serving Asian, gourmet, Brazilian and traditional steakhouse cuisine. Having stayed at many all-inclusives, JAX FAX was impressed with the quality of the food and service. As an example of their commitment to gourmet dining, according to the Executive Chef, Sandos Resorts spends twice the amount on their meats, as other 4-5 star all-inclusive resorts do. The only difference your clients find between dining in their specialty restaurants and their favorite hometown eateries is the lack of prices on the menu.

Special all-inclusive rates at Sandos Caracol Eco Resort & Spa and Sandos Playacar Riviera Hotel start at \$192 per person, Dec. 24, 2008 - Jan. 3, 2009. For more information on Sandos Resorts go to: www.sandoshotels.com.

Riu Hotels and Resorts

RIU Hotels & Resorts, a family owned and operated company, was founded in Palma de Mallorca (the Balearic Islands, Spain) in 1953. With more than 50 years of experience in the hotel industry, the Riu family brings their warm hospitality to travelers through their collection of hotels located in the finest beach destinations in Spain, the European Mediterranean, North Africa, Portugal, Florida, the Bahamas, the Caribbean and Central America.

Most recently, JAX FAX attended the grand opening of the Riu Palace Pacifico in the Riviera Nayarit development in Mexico just west of Puerto Vallarta and just a 15-minute drive from PVR airport. Mr. Luis Riu, Chief Executive of Riu Hotels was on hand to



escort the media on his ritual pre-opening inspection of the new resort. The Riu Palace Pacifico joins the Riu Vallarta and Riu Jalisco on the same stretch of beach on the beautiful Bay of Banderas, bringing Riu's total room count here to 1,700. Riu Palace properties are the premium product for Riu and are only built in areas that have been proven successful by their other existing resorts. Palace Pacifico welcomes families, but is primarily designed as an adult oasis with a world-class spa.

The design of the resort allows for ocean views from all rooms. The 22 "stepped" ocean front jacuzzi junior suites feature private jacuzzi on the oceanfront balcony; the 445 junior suites feature two queen or a king-sized bed with a separate sitting area with couch, coffee table and 25" satellite TV and either a balcony or terrace. Interconnecting junior suites can be reserved. The resort offers a large swimming pool with in pool lounges and a swim-up bar. A children's pool is located in the center of the adult pool. There is also a kids club with daily, organized activities for kids 4-12. Dining options include one main buffet style restaurant as well as four specialty restaurants available by reservation. Guests of the Riu Palace Pacifico can also dine and use the facilities of the two other Riu's within walking distance on the beach.

Riu has plans to begin construction on their 15th hotel in Mexico in Mazatlan in 2009 as well as a new 700 room five star, oceanfront resort in Guanacaste, Costa Rica with fall 2009 openings expected.

For more information, rates and reservations for Riu Hotels and Resorts visit www.riu.com

SkyLink™
The Airline Ticket Center™

Best airfares to MEXICO

www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

We offer the best:

- Combination of airlines to MEXICO
- Largest choice of airfares:
- Economy & Business Class fares
- Net fares and published
- Commissions

Visit www.jaxfaxmagazine.com/skylink

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Mexico see page 57 of the Listings Section

Meet Me at the Fountain

By Maria Lisella

The first time I visited Antigua, Guatemala, I made the trip with my husband and two friends as an extension to a visit to El Salvador. From San Salvador, traveling to Guatemala is a short plane ride into Guatemala City, in which we simply transferred immediately to the city of Antigua.

My friends had been to Antigua many times and adored the place so they organized stays at their favorite haunts and I went along for the ride, but I could not resist taking notes because once I arrived, I knew it would be the first of more visits. Antigua is among one of the most idyllic tourist towns and one of the most photogenic – its windows, doors, walls, signs, churches, arches, patios and fountains as well as flowers and trees provide a rich stage for unbeatable photos.

Learning a Language

Having said "tourist" may tarnish its appeal for some seeking authenticity, but this town is indeed "real" as one can see by the dichotomies of quotidian life: rural people stream into town in the mornings to hawk their wares – often bright textiles that have been handmade or woven on rudimentary looms, Doctors Without Borders arrive weekly to perform minor surgeries and volunteer medical expertise, all takes place side by side with painstaking efforts to raise funds for art restoration in churches while folding the natives into the tourism infrastructure rather than displacing them.

For those completely unfamiliar with this town, its main industry is derived from the 60 or so language schools that dot the entire town. My husband was so enamored of this place that within two months, he returned to be tutored in Spanish daily, with accommodations in a \$50 a night hotel.

Antigua is just about perfect for what it does best: to give visitors a sense of place, in this case, in Central America, albeit from the comfort of their hotel rooms, many of which are air conditioned, but observant and appreciative clients can learn a lot just by walking down the street.

Guatemala has a population of about 10 million, a large percentage of which belongs to the 21 ethno linguistic Mayan groups who have retained the cultural traditions they have inherited from their ancestors, as well as mestizo, and the Caribbean coast population, which has retained its African and Caribbean roots, visitors will see women dressed in brightly hued clothing, each distinct from that of another tribe.

Each group's clothing is different with some commonality. The faja is a belt worn by both sexes, women wear wrap-around skirts, while men wear knee or calf-length trousers and usually wear hats, and women often use ribbons in their hair. The *huipil* is a blouse that identifies a woman's status and hometown by the colors and exquisite woven patterns.

On Thursdays and Sundays, the town hosts a market for the Mayans themselves, although foreigners are welcome. Be prepared to bargain. Jewelry, carvings, hammocks, and exquisite Mayan cloth can be bought at extremely low prices.

Or, for those whose consciousness goes beyond the cheapest souvenir, do visit **Colibri**, an artisan shop that pays the creators of the products a fair market price – there is no bargaining. Located at 4a. C.O. No. 3-B.

WWW.JAXFAX.COM



Getting Oriented

The heart of the town is its main square from which *calles* and *avenidas* spoke out in straight lines. The square is ringed with the grandiose buildings of its past: the cathedral, the City Hall, the Palace of the Captains and an arcade that houses a bank, shops and cafes along the western rim. The square is cozy. One of the best ways to get oriented in this town is by taking a three-hour walking tour with Elizabeth Bell's Antigua Tours. Participants meet at the famous fountain in the Main Square, the Plaza de Armas.

The walking tour's focus is on cultural trends, city history, and restoration efforts. This comprehensive three-hour tour really gives life to the information visitors have read in guidebooks as told through Bell's personal and passionate relationship to Antigua and Guatemala. She has been behind efforts to convince Lloyds of London and Citibank to beautify the district.

We visited the Palace of City Hall, Palace of the Captains' General, the Cathedral with its majestic ruins, focusing then on houses, Mayan archeology through jade, and the best museums in town at Paseo de los Museos. Tickets cost \$20. Tours are conducted personally by Bell on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm; and on Monday and Thursday, 2 pm to 5 pm for \$20 per person, which includes all entrance fees and refreshments. A portion of the fees goes directly to help support the restoration of frescoes and the cathedral itself. The cathedral's whitewashed façade is scarred by tremors and earthquakes and its interior is practically in ruins, but for archeology buffs and romantic clients, the visit is a bittersweet one because even in its current state, the building is enchanting. Bell also offers tours of Antigua's surrounding villages one of which focuses on one of Guatemala's greatest treasures: its weavings. Call 866-672-6089; E-mail info@antiguatours.net; www.antiguatours.net

Not far from the main square is the green 17th century house that houses **Jades S.A.**, a museum and shop dedicated to educating visitors about the mining of jade. Tours are conducted in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Mary Lou Ridinger, founder of Jades, S.A. is an archaeologist who rediscovered and reopened an ancient jade mine back in 1987. Visit www.centramerica.com/jades

For information on Guatemala, visit www.guatemala.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Guatemala see page 57 of the Listings Section

Sensational Brazil's Magic Moment

By Maria Lisella

Brazil. Sensational! is the name of a global campaign **Embratur, the Brazilian Tourist Board**, in New York launched recently.

By employing the latest technology and social networking vehicles from print, television, online and out-of-home components, totaling millions in a global media investment, images of Brazil will be airing on three continents through June, 2009. Contrasting images will cover the famous places: Iguazu Falls, the Amazon, Rio, Bahia and the coastline of Recife, as well as feature historical and modern attractions, adventure and food, culture and beach, large events and the Amazon forest.

"This campaign launches a new phase in Brazilian promotion as a tourist destination, with a tailored focus on direct



Rio Beach from the Leblon Belvedere.

EMBRATUR

communication with foreign travelers," said Brazilian Minister of Tourism Luiz Barretto.

The campaign will launch in specific countries in North and South America and Europe, including: Argentina, Chile, Peru, the United States, Canada, Germany, Spain, France, Holland, England, Italy and Portugal. Together, these countries represent 70% of the foreign visitors to Brazil in 2007.

Tourism Nearing Record Levels

According to Embratur, Brazilian tourism revenues are nearing record levels as a result of foreign tourists extending the length of their stay and increasing their spending. Recent studies show that after Argentines, Americans visit Brazil most frequently totaling more than 700,000 visitors who spent about \$780 million.

Brazil boasts an average of five million visitors who spend about \$5 billion annually; it hosts more international events than any other country in the world such as the 2014 World Soccer Cup matches; and is a candidate for the 2016 Olympics.

At the heart of its economic Growth Acceleration Program is the Brazilian government's plan to upgrade the country's infrastructure to the tune of about \$300 billion by 2010 as well as to highlight investment opportunities. Often that big picture does not include tourism, but since a Tourism Ministry was officially created in 2003 when President Luiz Inacio Lula stepped into office, that vision has changed. Lula takes tourism seriously.

Embratur will be opening offices in nine markets that support Brazilian products. The goal is to increase the annual numbers for tourists entering the country to nine million, and attracting a total amount of \$8 billion in revenue by 2010.

New air service is giving access to more of Brazil. On November 1, **TAM** inaugurated new nonstop service between New York's JFK and Rio de Janeiro for a total of eight flights.

In September, **American Airlines** added new flights between Rio and New York, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, Washington, D.C. and Houston.

For more information on Brazil, contact Embratur, www.embratur.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Brazil see page 55-56 of the Listings Section

BEST BUYS

\$1099 COSTA RICA, SOUTH AMERICA

GotMyFare is offering two special packages to Costa Rica. The nine-day, air-inclusive package priced at \$1,099 per person double, includes, roundtrip transfers, accommodations, tours to tropical jungles and cloud forests in Monteverde, to Tortuguero, volcanoes and the ever-popular **ecotermes** or hot springs in Arenal. Children aged 11 and younger get a discount of \$150. Add cost of roundtrip transfers by plane from San Jose to Tambor at \$111 per person.

On the high end is a 14-day program priced at \$2,899 per person double that travels to Brazil, Argentina and Peru with departures scheduled from Feb. 9 through July 30, 2009 with roundtrip airfare from Miami. Among the participating properties are Oceano Copacabana, Recanto Park Hotel, and Aspen Suites or similar. Call **800-722-4522**; www.gotmyfare.com

\$4695 MEXICO

To mark **American Safari Cruises'** eighth season in Mexico's Sea of Cortés, travel agents can earn up to 20 percent commission and get a \$250 per person travel credit for their clients when they book a luxury yacht cruise on a select departure on the company's two Mexico itineraries. Booking deadline for the special commission and the travel credit is Dec. 31.

Preferred partners will receive the maximum 20 percent, and agents who are members of ASC's Yachtlist program – or become a yacht specialist in upcoming webinars – will receive 17 percent. All other agents will receive 15 percent. Yachtlist webinar schedules are announced by e-mail invitation and posted on the website under Travel Agent.

Eligible dates on American Safari Cruises' eight-day, seven-night cruises between colonial Loreto and colorful La Paz are Jan. 18; Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22; March 1, 8, 15, 22. The route includes the area explored by author John Steinbeck, and which Jacques Cousteau called "the aquarium of the world" for its bounty of indigenous wildlife. The guest-to-crew ratio is 2 to 1. Inclusive prices begin at \$4,695 per person double. Call **888-862-8881**; www.amsafari.com

\$4295 ECUADOR

Boundless Journeys is offering a holiday trip to Ecuador: The Galapagos Islands slated to depart on Christmas day, December 25, 2008-January 3, 2009;

Priced at \$4295 per person, the naturalist-led cruise on a private yacht introduces guests to the many wonders that are unique to the Galapagos Islands, and allows participants to explore from many different perspectives: from snorkeling with sea lions, walking on volcanic islands, paddling kayaks through peaceful mangrove lagoons, strolling barefooted along sun drenched beaches, or simply lying back and relaxing in the equatorial sun. Prices are per person, double and do not include internal airfare of \$410 per person and a fuel surcharge of \$235 per person. Call **800-941-8010**; www.boundlessjourneys.com

IN THE NEWS

Intl. Expeditions' Bicentennial Bargain

To kick off the year of Darwin's 200th birthday, **International Expeditions** free airfare, representing a \$900 credit on its January 2 and Feb. 6, 2009 voyages. During the intimate 10-day Galapagos cruise, guests come just inches from giant tortoises, blue-footed boobies, sea lions, penguins, iguanas and many other animals. International Expeditions' renowned naturalist guides — all Galapagos National Park-certified with top "Naturalist Level 3" designations — lead talks about the islands' highly diverse and rich ecosystems and discussions on conservation practices to protect this fragile environment.

International Expeditions' 32-passenger M/V Evolution navigates the islands, and is small enough to access some of the most compelling sites, like Genovesa (Tower) Island, home to red-footed booby and frigatebird colonies. The ship's pangas (landing craft) are used several times a day and with space for all to go easily and quickly ashore, there's no queuing up. Accommodations aboard the Evolution are spacious and comfortable, with a host of amenities including an observation deck, sun deck and canopied bar (a superb place for whale watching). Complimentary snorkeling equipment, wet suits and kayaks are available for use on a variety of excursions. Per person prices for the 10-day Galapagos Voyages departing Jan. 2 and 16 starting at \$4,498, including the \$500 bonus savings, accommodations, most meals, local transportation, guides and groups transfers. Additional Galapagos departures will be available throughout 2009.

Call **800-633-4734**; E-mail nature@ietravel.com; www.ietravel.com

Solar's Grand Brazilian Bazaar

No trip to South America would be complete without a journey to Brazil, one of the largest nations on the planet and **Solar Tours** is selling a veritable marketplace of options. Solar's shortest itinerary is the seven-night Beyond Rio that combines four nights in Rio with three in Buzios starting at \$1,189 per person double with air. The 11-night Golden Route starts in Rio and continues through Paraty, Belo Horizonte, Ouro Preto, and Salvador da Bahia. Clients will get to see some of the long-gone glory of ancient gold mine towns and get a taste of Brazil's extremely diverse cultural heritage in Bahia starting at \$2,465 per person.

The 12-night Best of Brazil is completely customizable, and includes four Brazilian symbols: Rio, Iguazu Falls, Manaus in the Amazon, and Brazil's African Heritage capital, Salvador da Bahia, priced at \$4,465 per person double. The Samba and Tango Experience should satisfy your clients with a taste of two unique cities, Rio and Buenos Aires, and visit one of the greatest natural wonders in South America, the Iguazu Falls. Priced at \$1,879 for eight nights, it represents another great value.

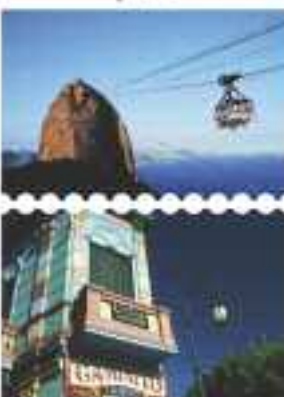
For more options and information, contact Solar Tours, **800-388-7652**; or visit its newly enhanced website at <http://latin.solartours.com>



Great deals to South America

ROUTE	FARE
MIA-BUE-MIA	599.00
JFK-BUE-JFK	599.00
JFK-SAO-JFK	483.00
JFK-MVD-JFK	549.00
JFK-COR-JFK	599.00
MIA-SCL-MIA	599.00
JFK-RIO-JFK	483.00
MIA-SAO-MIA	483.00
MIA-CCS-MIA	349.00
MIA-ASU-MIA	823.00
MIA-SRZ-MIA	639.00

Also Puerto Rico de Janeiro, Santos, Arica and other destinations in South America from the gateway MIA and JFK. Choose your offer and call us to make a great deal.



Call us -1 866 580 2427

We offer Electronic Ticketing

Quick and Efficient Purchase with no extra fees

THE TRAVEL AGENTS FOR THE AMERICAS
TOLL FREE: 1-866-580-2427 FAX: (305) 456-6331 WWW.C-TRAVEL.NET

USVI's Team Spirit Creates Savvy Deals

As gas prices continue to soar, the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism wants to ease the impact on stressed-out travelers with promotions that follow them through Winter.

Kicking off the season is the return of non-stop flights to St. Thomas via **US Airways** from two of the destination's key mainland markets – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Charlotte, North Carolina – representing an overall increase in air service to St. Thomas this winter season compared to the same period last year.

Led by the Department of Tourism and Virgin Islands Port Authority, the public/private sector committee formed by Governor John de Jongh has worked closely over the past six months to meet with existing and potential airline carriers and strategize joint initiatives to address announced service reductions across the airline industry. In June 2008, planned flight reductions represented a 31% decrease in air capacity for the Territory. St. Thomas will now see a 3% year-over-year increase in air capacity. Efforts to restore service to St. Croix have been similarly successful, with all but 9 percent of proposed reductions restored.

"In these daunting economic times, the return of service from US Airways illustrates the continued strong demand for airlift to the USVI," noted Tourism Commissioner Beverly Nicholson-Doty. "Thanks to this show of support from US Airways and the continued support of our existing airline partners, air capacity to St. Thomas has increased more than three percent, by 571 seats, since May." The announcement of additional non-stop daily and weekly service from Philadelphia and Charlotte this winter adds to the existing air capacity to the Territory from these key markets, and complements an already comprehensive roster of North American gateway markets offering convenient same-day airlift to the USVI. Round-trip, same-day service is also available to St. Thomas from Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, New York, San Juan and Washington, D.C.; and to St. Croix from Atlanta, Miami and San Juan.

From Dec. 18, 2008, through January 3, 2009, US Airways will offer an additional non-stop daily flight to St. Thomas from Philadelphia and another from Charlotte, North Carolina as well as an additional weekly non-stop flight to the island from both cities.

Cruises and...

As part of its on-going efforts to stimulate business and increase overnight stays in St. Croix, St. Thomas and St. John, the Department of Tourism has launched a new "USVI Six to Six" promotion, aiming to convert cruise ship passengers visiting the destination for six hours to land based vacationers who will stay at least six nights.

Encouraging longer visits with a complimentary sixth night, the vacation package also includes a free bottle of Cruzan Rum, a sixth-day free car rental, \$60 gift card and a coupon book valued at up to \$626. Those booking the package become eligible to win one of six return trips to America's Caribbean.

Beverly Nicholson-Doty, U.S. Virgin Islands Commissioner of Tourism, said, "We recognize the potential for return visits and overnight stays from cruise visitors, so the department is providing them with incentives to return and extend



Charlotte Amalie Harbor

their stay and truly immerse themselves in our islands' rich culture, local hospitality and natural beauty."

The USVI Six to Six promotion, will be offered through December 31, 2009. The offer can be booked directly with participating hotels. Participating hotels on St. Thomas include: **Anchorage Beach Resort, Best Western Emerald Beach Hotel, Bolongo Bay Beach Club and Villas, Crystal Cove Beach Resort, Holiday Inn Windward Passage, Frenchman's Reef Marriott, Island Beachcomber Hotel, Pavilions and Pools, Point Pleasant Resort, Sapphire Beach Resort, Sapphire Village Resort and Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa.** On St. Croix, **The Buccaneer, Carambola Beach Resort, Divi Carina Bay Resort & Casino, Hibiscus Beach Resort, Holger Dankse Hotel, The Hotel Caravelle, The Palms at Pelican Cove, Sand Castle on the Beach and Sugar Beach Resort.** On St. John, the **Maho Bay Campground** is participating. Black out dates may apply. Request the package by name – USVI Six to Six or use booking code 626CP.

Valentine's Day Not Far Off

Bolongo Bay Beach Resort in St. Thomas has created a perennial favorite: the five or seven-night Island Bliss, which features beachfront accommodations with a view of the Caribbean from the balcony. Upon arrival, guests will find a chilled bottle of Champagne and two souvenir flutes, chocolate-dipped fruit and tropical flowers, full breakfast, lunch and dinner, with all dining a la carte, unlimited drinks and house wine, His and Hers half-hour massages, a \$50 resort credit, a romantic sunset cocktail cruise around historic Charlotte Amalie harbor.

A day sail to St. John is also included with the seven-night stays, His and Her's T-shirts, a Discover Scuba lesson in the pool, unlimited use of windsurfers, sunfish sailboats, kayaks, aqua tricycles, swim mats, view boards and snorkel equipment. Rates range from \$3,630 to \$4,964 from Dec. 23-April 30, 2009. Call **800-524-4746**; E-mail reservations@bolongobay.com; www.bolongobay.com

Details: As a United States Territory, travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands does not require a passport from U.S. citizens arriving from Puerto Rico or the U.S. mainland. Entry requirements for non-U.S. citizens are the same as for entering the United States from any foreign destination. Upon departure, a passport is required for all but U.S. citizens.

For more information about the **United States Virgin Islands**, visit usvitourism.vi

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to U.S.V.I. see page 53 of the Listings Section

BEST BUYS

\$242 PUERTO RICO

With a recent \$120 million, property-wide renovation the **El Conquistador** is not only celebrating its 40th but will raise a glass to guests celebrating 40th birthdays or anniversaries in 2008 with the 'Celebrating 40' package. This limited-time only package includes chilled Champagne and tropical fruits delivered upon arrival, two 40-minute Golden Door Spa massages, 40% off rounds of golf, a decadent 40th celebration cake, full Caribbean buffet breakfast daily for two adults at Las Brisas restaurant and round trip motorcoach transportation for two adults to and from Luis Munoz Marin International Airport. Packages start at \$242 per room, per night, based on three-night minimum through Dec. 20, 2008. El Conquistador is also offering guests the chance to hold their own complimentary private fiesta at Palomino Island or Coqui Water Park when guests book 40 rooms or more; guests booking 40 one-, two- or three-bedroom casitas at Las Casitas Village will receive their own private celebration on one of El Conquistador's luxury catamarans. Call **866-317-8932**; www.elconresort.com; www.lascasitavillage.com

\$250 ST. LUCIA

Windjammer Landing Villa Beach Resort, the award-winning, luxurious eco-friendly property on St. Lucia, is celebrating the opening of its new 1,100 sq. ft., suites, and offering up to 60% savings plus Sun Dollars (resort credit) too. The offer is valid for the new Anthurium Lily Junior Suites (perfect for couples and honeymooners) and is good for stays from Dec. 1 (check in) until Dec. 27 (check out). The suites have glorious ocean views and feature tropical touches as each will have customized vessel sink and shower designs by noted St. Lucia artist, Michelle Elliot. Nightly rates for two start at either \$250 per couple per night (normally \$450) or \$290 for the premium suites (normally \$490) for stays through Dec. 27, 2008. Call **800-345-0356**; **800-958-7376**; www.windjammer-landing.com

\$318 ANTIGUA

The Verandah Resort and Spa, Antigua's newest all inclusive, all-suite resort will provide \$2,000 per room to offset the cost of airfare this holiday season. As a bonus the kids stay play and eat FREE. Nightly rates start at \$318 per adult double occupancy for a seven-night or longer stay at The Verandah. Call **800-345-0356**; www.eliteislands.com

Go to www.jaxfaxmagazine.com to Download JAXFAX E-Magazine for additional features such as:



Star-Studded Puerto Rico

By Maria Lisella

IN THE NEWS

Puerto Rico's Endless Summer Ends Dec. 20

For a more tranquil getaway, **Holiday Inn San Juan's** 'Endless Summer' Fall Deal is packaged to sell. It includes accommodations in Superior Rooms; 15% discount off food and beverage at the hotel's three signature restaurants: **Eighty20 Bistro**, **Coladas** and **J.H. Yeess**; \$10.00 casino match-play coupon... Up to two children 12 years or younger stay at no additional cost when sharing room with parents. The package is \$69.00 per night/pp, based on double occupancy, plus government tax and resort fee, valid through Dec. 20, 2008. Call **787-253-9000**; www.hisanjuan.com

American Adds Winter Service to Jamaica

Jamaica will enjoy increased service from another major U.S. carrier this winter. **American Airlines** will offer five times weekly service from Chicago; daily service from Dallas beginning Dec. 18, 2008; will add a third daily flight to Miami, while continuing daily service out of Fort Lauderdale; as well as four times weekly service out of New York.

Jamaican tourism officials said "Winter is typically Jamaica's busiest season, and additional flights make the destination more accessible to travelers looking to take a winter break." Visit www.aa.com

AN UNFORGETTABLE ALL-INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE... IN THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS!

- 65 rooms right on the beach
- Fantastic food - incredible variety
- All Premium brand cocktails
- Friendliest staff anywhere
- No passport required for US citizens

SEE YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE NOW!

WWW.BOLONGOBAY.COM
1-800-524-4746 • 340-775-1800

Divi's Inside Edge on Inflation

By Lea Lane



In this shaky economy, all-inclusive vacations help clients stretch dollars. With this in mind, **Jax Fax** just returned from another look at **Divi & Tamarijn Aruba Resorts**, along this sunny island's sandy Druif beach. The facilities, amenities and services of both properties are available to guests at either resort, with minimum additional costs.

Ten minutes from the airport and five minutes from Aruba's lively capital city, Oranjestad, these Divi all-inclusive properties are close to entertainment, shopping and the **Alhambra Casino**. Guests do not need to rent a car or use taxis, another major cost-cutter.

Divi & Tamarijn Aruba all-inclusive resorts offer dining options, activities, services and amenities. The properties share a long, sandy beach that is augmented by three large freshwater pools.

The **Divi Winds Sports Center** features an oceanfront fitness center with the latest equipment, as well as a 30-foot outdoor rock-climbing wall on the beach. Non-motorized water sports include snorkeling equipment, snorkel clinic and tour, sunfish sailing, floats, kayaks, beginner's windsurfing equipment and "Learn to Windsurf" beach clinic. Land activities range from tennis, beach volleyball, beach olympics, bikes and bike tours, to lessons in the local dialect, Papiamentu.

The Divi Aruba has an inventory of 203 air-conditioned accommodations in one-, two- or three-story buildings, and the oceanfront **Tamarijn Aruba** features 236 oceanfront guestrooms in two-story buildings. All accommodations include a patio or balcony and flat screen television.

Ten different dining outlets serve everything from steaks or Italian fare to Asian-fusion cuisine or pizza and snacks. Stays at the Divi & Tamarijn Aruba include all meals, snacks and beverages.

Other amenities include an Internet Lounge (for a fee) at the Tamarijn Aruba; WiFi in all guestrooms and common areas; Indulgence by the Sea spa; nightly entertainment; coupons for the adjacent Alhambra Casino; and tickets to Aruba's popular Bon Bini Festival (seasonal), with authentic Aruban folkloric dance and song (which we especially enjoyed). Off-property trips can be arranged, such as the Caribbean catamaran snorkeling cruise we enjoyed.

Additional cost-cutting: Divi & Tamarijn Aruba packages and specials are offered for honeymooners and families with kids; some offer two kids under age 18 free when sharing a room with two paying adults.

Besides standard wedding packages, family and friends worldwide who cannot attend an Aruba-based ceremony, can now watch a broadcast of the couple's wedding in real time, using the Divi "I Do Live" option costs an additional, \$770. Visit www.ishmedia.com

The all-inclusive rate for suites tranges from \$219.60 to \$242.10, per person double with taxes and service charges, based on a three-night minimum Dec. 23-Jan 1. Call 800-554-2008; www.diviaruba.com or www.tamarijnaruba.com

Jax Fax stayed in a spacious one-bedroom golf villa at

Divi Village Golf & Beach Resort with kitchen and laundry, overlooking the nine-hole Divi Aruba golf course, an optional amenity that offers discounted green fees and premium tee times to all-inclusive resort guests. The course features an on-site golf school and clubhouse with pro shop. The final 52 of 240 golf villas will be completed by early 2009. Rack rates start at \$421 valid Jan. 3 – April 17, 2009; and \$320, (from April 18-Dec. 23, 2009 for the Deluxe Studio Golf Villa. Rates are room only, single or double occupancy, not including tax or service charges. Visit www.divivillage.com

Phoenix Towers to Debut

The **Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach**, in the Palm Beach area, plans to debut Dec. 27, 2008 opening for its two new towers. The 140 additional beachfront suites include full kitchens with granite counters, king beds and queen sleeper-sofas, 42-inch plasma TVs, washer/dryers and jetted tubs. This redesigned, casually elegant resort includes a new café, Pure Beach, with a European beach club aesthetic, and a free-form pool with computerized lights and a swim-up bar. The atmosphere is sophisticated and relaxing. Rack rates for the Beach Tower one-bedroom unit start at \$456 valid Jan 3, 2009 to April 17; and \$350 April 18-Dec. 23, 2009. Rates are room only, single or double occupancy.

Visit www.diviphoenix.com

New Dining Options

For guests who wish to explore off-site dining options, we checked out some of Aruba's newest restaurants:

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse at the **Aruba Marriott** features top-grade steaks and lobsters and hearty sides. Visit www.ruthschris.com

Gambero Rossi in Orenjestad's Marina Mall, with a terrace overlooking the sea. Shrimp and mussels among choices in new Italian cuisine. Visit www.gamberorossoaruba.com

Screaming Eagle, on Eagle Beach, sister restaurant to the popular Flying Fishbone, featuring a waterfront terrace and French fusion dishes including ceviche with orange or ginger syrup, and crème brulee of duck liver with mango compote and brioche. Open nightly. Visit www.screaming-eagle.net

Getting There

Among the carriers that fly direct to Aruba are **Jet Blue** from New York-JFK; **US Airways** from Philadelphia, Charlotte and Boston (the latter only weekly); **Continental** from Newark and Houston; **United** from D.C. Dulles and Chicago; **Delta** from Atlanta; **American** from New York-JFK, Miami and San Juan; and **Air Canada** from Toronto.

For more information, contact the **Aruba Tourism Authority**, 800-To-Aruba; www.aruba.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Aruba see page 53 of the Listings Section



to provide travel agent partners with the best service by expanding its sales force.

As a direct result of rapid growth that will see the line's fleet increase to 12 ships by the end of 2009, the line is adding three experienced regional sales managers (RSM): **Dominick LaVarco** will service the New Jersey

MSC Cruises Expands Regional Agent Sales Force

Rick (Richard) E. Sasso, president and CEO of **MSC Cruises (USA)** is delivering on the company's promise

territory, **Lon Mitchel** will cover New York State and Connecticut, and **Mary Anne LaChance** (nee McKeown) will service travel agents in Canada.

Trio of Pros

"The three newest members of our sales force have years of experience and success in the travel industry. We are proud to have them on the MSC Cruises team to help us better serve our travel agent partners," says **Sasso**.

LaVarco, a resident of Caldwell, NJ, has more than 25 years experience in the travel industry, having served in

several positions for Amadeus and, most recently, as travel agency sales manager for Eos Airlines.

Mitchel, a CTC based in East Meadow, NY, has more than 20 years in travel marketing, sales and promotions. He comes from his position as a district sales manager (DSM) for Celebrity Cruises/Royal Caribbean International. Prior to that, he was a DSM for Walt Disney Company and RSM for Kingdom Vacations in Plains, PA, and worked with international tour operators. Call 800-666-9333; www.msccruisesagent.com



ed her own tourism and special events management business on St. Kitts for the past four years. During that time, she also undertook various key special projects for tourism, including serving as the local consultant liaison to the Boston-based OTF Group, who conducted research in 2006 for the devel-

St. Kitts Tourism Welcomes Jeffers as New CEO

Rosecita Jeffers has been appointed as the new CEO for the St. Kitts Tourism Authority. A Kittitian native, Jeffers has successfully operat-

opment of St. Kitts' long-term tourism sector strategy.

Private Industry, Public Know-How

Prior to her private enterprise experience, Jeffers worked as a member of the management team at the **St. Kitts & Nevis Ministry of Tourism**. A graduate of the University of the West Indies (UWI), she trained in tourism and hospitality.

"Mrs. Jeffers is well suited to lead our Tourism Authority as we strive to develop a more proactive organization that is focused on the competitive

needs of the marketplace as well as the needs of our tourism stakeholders and local people," said Senator Ricky Skeritt, Minister of State in the Ministry of Tourism, Sports & Culture. "Her entrepreneurial spirit combined with her extensive knowledge and understanding of our island's tourism product are qualities that will be invaluable in her position. Her appointment is further evidence of our government's commitment to empowering local people and cultivating local leadership in tourism." Call 800-582-6208; www.stkittstourism.kn



is returning to the airline after previously serving as President and Chief Operating Officer of Air Jamaica from June 2002 to March 2003.

"Mr. Nobles is recognized as a leader in the aviation industry, and widely regarded as an authority on launching and establishing aviation products in the marketplace," said

Nobles Returns to Air Jamaica in Top Spot

Air Jamaica has appointed **Bruce Nobles** to the position of **President and Chief Executive Officer**. Nobles

Shirley Williams, Chairman, Air Jamaica.

Aviation Industry Star

Nobles is a 40-year veteran of the transportation industry.

He is credited with leading the successful restructuring of **Hawaiian Airlines**, developing and introducing operations for the **Pan Am Shuttle** and recreating and implementing operations for the **Trump Shuttle**. Additionally, he has held executive positions at **Continental Airlines**, **Republic Airlines** and **American Airlines**.

Most recently, Nobles served as President of The Renwick Company, a Dallas-based aviation and transportation consulting company. There, he spearheaded several high-profile aviation projects including assignments for PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP, one of which was a comprehensive review of Air Jamaica and its business plan in late 1999.

He has also completed assignments for The International Finance Corporation, a division of the World Bank and numerous others.

Visit www.airjamaica.com

Star-Studded Puerto Rico

By Maria Lisella

Puerto Rico will never lose its sun and fun destination profile, but it is quite serious about its emergence as the Caribbean's top meeting destination. With the spectacular Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC) as the anchor for this transformation, hotel inventory and increasingly state of the art facilities are showing up to buttress that effort.

With several properties undergoing extensive renovations and the announcement of new properties, Puerto Rico's hotel development is booming. The most dynamic hotel brands in the world are investing in Puerto Rico, including **The St. Regis, W Hotel, Sheraton, InterContinental, Courtyard Marriott** and **Regent**. As of this summer, more than 4,774 new hotel rooms will be under construction, totaling nearly \$1.5 billion in new investment and generating an additional 3,574 new jobs.

Currently, Puerto Rico is served by 27 airlines that fly to/from 62 destinations. Air service is reaching new heights in Puerto Rico as new flights and route expansions increased seat capacity by 2% and have generated an economic impact of over \$100 million.

This year is projected to be Puerto Rico's cruise industry's strongest year. Building up on the past years' initiatives, the island is continuing to expand and renovate its passenger ship terminals, securing additional cruise lines to dock in its ports, and redeveloping the San Juan waterfront into a bustling promenade and supporting private investment in the Island's tourism infrastructure. Identified by the International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL) as the fifth largest cruise passenger traffic homeport in the Eastern hemisphere of the Americas (and the largest cruise port in the Caribbean), San Juan continues to be a leader in the Caribbean's cruise and shipping industry. Island-wide, Puerto Rico received a total of 1,376,167 number of passengers in FY07, representing an increase of 5.9% (76,844 passengers) from FY06. With significant investments being made to Puerto Rico's major ports and with an increased focus into marketing and promotions efforts, the Puerto Rico Tourism Company foresees, and aims for, an increase in passenger traffic of 1.7 million by 2011, which will in turn generate an increase in economic impact from the current \$300 million to \$500 million.

Convention Center is the Lynchpin

With the opening of its new Puerto Rico Convention Center (PRCC) in the heart of San Juan, Puerto Rico has been carving a path to build itself as the business hub of the Caribbean. As much as its sunny weather and resort business has always attracted the leisure side of travel, this island's development as a meeting destination has been a blessing for local hotels.

Back then, in 2006, the the lack of a headquarter convention property may have been an obstacle for the PRCC, which is capable of hosting events with 10,000 attendees.



PUERTO RICO NTO/TRAVEL 7 SPORT INC

The 500-room **San Juan Convention Center Hotel** was originally scheduled to open in 2007. Ground was broken in late 2005, but the opening date was pushed back to 2008. That has now been revised and **Starwood Hotels & Resorts** will inaugurate the 500-room, \$211 million Sheraton Puerto Rico Convention Center Hotel in 2010 as the anchor hotel for the Puerto Rico Convention Center Master Plan. Will be the first hospitality and mixed-use development in the Convention Center District, located adjacent to the world-class 580,000 sq. ft. facility. As part of the master plan, the Convention Center District will have a total of 1,800 rooms available.

Additionally, to add to themuch needed lodging inventory to accommodate the oncoming meeting and convention business, a \$95 million **Plaza Internacional Hotel** is also expected to open in 2010. It will be located near **Luis Muñoz Marín Airport** in San Juan and will include 264 guest rooms and 590,000 sq. ft. of retail space. The hotel will be operated by the **InterContinental Hotel Group**.

Beyond San Juan

Marriott International invested \$127 million in the new **Renaissance La Concha Hotel & Casino** that opened a year ago in December. The 483-room hotel offers 15,000 sq. ft of meeting space, a 15,000 sq. ft. casino, three restaurants, an oceanfront pool and a 5,000 sq. ft. fitness center located on the beach.

A \$13.6 million 152-room **Courtyard by Marriott** in Aguadilla opened in August 2008. The resort-like setting is just two minutes from the Aguadilla Airport and 10 minutes to the beach, downtown, the business area and many attractions. Spacious guest rooms include air conditioning, luxurious bedding, laptop-sized safe, refrigerator and large-screen TVs. **JW Hotels** will invest \$223 million to open in the **CoCo Beach Resort & Residences** in 2009. The property will feature 400 hotel rooms, in addition Trump Branded Residences. **CreditSuisse**, together with local Puerto Rico investors, will invest over \$195 million to finish construction on the new 314-room **InterContinental Cayo Largo Beach Resort & Golf Course** to open in 2010.

PRTC recently purchased the old "Punta Lima" minimum security prison facility in Naguabo for \$8.2 million, with the aim of developing the site as an upscale boutique resort. A private company will develop and operate the property.

Newest Five Stars

For the first time in Puerto Rico's history, several five-star properties will call Puerto Rico home. Each of these properties will entice the leisure traveler to the Island and help Puerto Rico reposition itself and its marketing strategy.

PUERTO RICO NTO/TRAVEL 7 SPORT INC



Next year, the **W Hotel & Spa Vieques**; the first W in the Caribbean with an investment of \$135 million; the property will boast a variety of five-star amenities and 156 rooms.

The 305-room, \$106 million **Condado Vanderbilt Hotel** is slated to open in

2009 as well.

By 2010, **St. Regis Hotel & Spa** will open with 139 rooms. The opening of this property represents an investment of \$170 million. The exclusive resort will sit on the Bahia Beach Resort and Golf Club grounds as part of a \$1.1 billion master plan luxury lifestyle community.

And by 2011, expect to see the **Mandarin Oriental's Porta Caribe** to go up, billed as an exclusive 142-room property that boasts an investment of \$206 million will be located at the **Palmas del Mar Golf Resort**. Additionally, The **Regent Hotel** will add 155 rooms at a cost of \$172 million.

Renovations and Reflagging

Wyndham Hotel Management Inc. took over management of the Westin Rio Mar last spring, under a 20-year agreement and reflagged it as the **Wyndham Rio Mar**. Wyndham has begun a \$40 million capital improvement project to upgrade guestrooms, casino, meeting rooms, public areas, restaurants and golf courses. The multimillion-dollar capital improvement project includes \$4.7 million in renovations to the 7,000-square-foot Rio Mar Casino.

The **Paradisus** was recently reflagged and renamed **Sol Melia's** high-end brand: **Gran Melia Beach & Resort**, the only one in the Caribbean.

San Juan's 173-room historic **Normandie Hotel** completed an \$8 million renovation with features including wireless access throughout the property, 7,000 square-feet of meeting space, two 800-gallon fish tanks in the lobby, art deco furnishings, two restaurants and a spa. The hotel, originally opened in 1942 and known for its unique shape resembling a luxury liner, was acquired by Caribbean Property Group in 2007; the same firm also owns the **Ritz-Carlton San Juan Hotel Spa & Casino** and the **Radisson Ambassador Plaza Hotel & Casino**.

Starwood now manages the **Martineau Bay Resort** on Vieques Island with an investors group from Spain who will invest \$60 million to convert the hotel into the first W Resort in the world. It is scheduled to open in 2009.

The **San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino** (owned by AIG Global Real Estate) has begun a \$36.7 million renovation to bring the property to the level of other luxury resorts on the island. The 402 rooms being renovated will gradually come back into service.

The 123-room cabana wing will be under renovation through November but will remain open during the process. The finished project will include a grand lobby, updated casino, refreshed ballroom and guest rooms with a new Latin Caribbean look.

The **Water Club in San Juan** has officially changed its name to **San Juan Water & Beach Club Hotel** and has added amenities including renovated bathrooms featuring bath and spa products from H2O Plus and Wi-Fi access.

Air Access on Rise

The **Puerto Rico Tourism Company** has spearheaded a campaign to increase air access to the Island and its various airports. As a result, traffic to the Porta del Sol region, on the Island's west coast, has increased by 8.4 percent since 2004, representing 289,780 visitors; visits by non-residents increased by 23 percent over the past four years from 63,716 visitors in 2004 to 78,489 visitors in 2008.

"We have spent over \$1.5 million in the development of marketing strategies to promote Porta del Sol, without counting the numerous events we sponsor in the region. Our commitment to Porta del Sol is such that it is the only tourist region in the Island that has its own publicity campaign in the U.S. and the rest of the Americas," said Gonzalez-Denton.

Jet Blue offers three new routes from Orlando (MCO), including twice daily non-stop flights to San Juan (SJU) and once daily flights to Aguadilla (BQN), seasonal service to Ponce (PSE) and seasonal non-stop service to San Juan from Boston Logan Airport (BOS).

Last year, **Spirit Airlines** launched non-stop service from Fort Lauderdale (FLL) to Aguadilla (BQN) five times per week, and also launched seasonal, non-stop service to San Juan (SJU) from Atlantic City (ACY) and from Tampa (TPS).

Continental Airlines offers daily service to Ponce (PSE) and Aguadilla (BQN) from Newark Liberty International. And Continental has increased service from Houston by 77%, raising the number of seats weekly to 4, 252 from 2,404.

Air Tran Airways began flying between the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and San Juan Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (LMM) on March 5, 2008. The same day, nonstop flights between the Orlando International Airport (MCO) and the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport (LMM) were launched, adding a second daily, non-stop flight as of April 9, 2008.

American Eagle has added new flights to Puerto Rico from Samana, St. Lucia, and Martinique. Additionally, they have increased weekly seat capacity from Anguilla 100% from 896 to 1,792.

Ted Airlines (A subsidiary of **United Airways**) has increased service from Chicago 10%, now offering 3,812 seats, and also increased service from Washington 101% now offering 4,988 flights.

Airports Enhanced

Through 2011, a series of capital improvements totalling nearly \$400 million are scheduled for **Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport** (SJU).

On the west coast, Aguadilla's **Rafael Hernandez Airport** (BQN) recently opened its new \$10.1 million international terminal. For the sixth consecutive year in a row, Rafael Hernandez Airport has recorded phenomenal growth in traffic figures and received a record 417,006 passengers in 2008, representing a 23.3 percent growth over 2007, during which a total of 381,950 passengers traveled through the airport.

With increased travel to the island's southern region, the Puerto Rico Ports Authority invested \$2.5 million to renovate the **Ponce Mercedita Airport** (PSE).

For more information, contact the **Puerto Rico Tourism Company**, www.gotopuertorico.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Puerto Rico see page 53 of the Listings Section

Bon Bini Bonaire

Story and photos by Denise Mattia

Known well by adventurers, explorers and sun-worshippers alike, the Dutch Caribbean Island of Bonaire, located 50 miles off the coast of Venezuela, offers world renowned scuba diving and snorkeling, windsurfing, kiteboarding, landsailing, mountain biking, nature tours, hiking, bird watching, sailing and deep sea and bone fishing. And the island's not in the path of winter storms or summer hurricanes. Your clients can enjoy a sunny clime year round.

From June to September this year, visitors to Bonaire were given the opportunity to enjoy savings on hotel packages, experience local foods at festivals, join a photo competition, and learn more about the flora and fauna through seminars, tours and interactive dives conducted by renowned professionals. The program, Dive Into Summer 2008, was sponsored by **Continental Airlines**, the **Coral Reef Alliance**, **EarthEcho International**, **Scuba Diving Magazine** and **STINAPA** (Stichting Nationale Parken).

"It used to be that when September rolled around, the Tourism sector slowed down," admitted Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, Director of **Tourism Corporation Bonaire**, during a discussion with JAXFAX. "Our annual Marketing Meeting is in September, and, for a few years now, we've been hosting Love Our Planet Week, and an undertaking we very much value – the Wounded Warriors Project."

From September 20th to the 27th, JAXFAX was among the guests who joined in activities for the Love Our Planet Week, which was hosted for the second year in a row at **Captain Don's Habitat**. Ed Clark of the **Wildlife Center of Virginia**, Rick MacPherson of the Coral Reef Alliance, Steve McCulloch of the **Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute** in Florida and Fernando Simal from the **Washington Slagbaai National Park** in Bonaire discussed preservation, conservation and research. Each was on hand to point out the features and creatures above and beneath the water.

Captain Don's Habitat provides a wide range of accommodations and conference space to match vacation and small convention needs. A 15% commission is offered to travel agents on prepaid packages. The original buildings, built in 1976, have been updated and are suitable for one or two guests, while the newer, more spacious bungalows, villas and apartments house four to six visitors. Prices start at \$113 for one during the low season and \$145 from December 15 to March 31. Top prices for quad occupancies range from \$254 in summer months to \$296 in winter.

Visit www.habitatbonaire.com

The three-star informal resort is a favorite with repeat guests, and one need only to snorkel or dive at the "house reef" to know why: the site's as good as any of the 63 accessible from shore. Jump into the warm water and you'll be in the center of a traffic jam of tiny reef fish and gigantic tarpon. Once at the reef, an abundance of marine life unfolds. Love Our Planet Week coincided with the coral spawn, and JAXFAX was privy to witness this spectacular



event during a night dive with Rick MacPheason (www.coral.org).

JAXFAX visited **Harbour Village Beach Club**, which Harper's Bazaar designated as "one of the 12 best seaside resorts in the world." With a wide natural beach, a 64-slip marina and a natural, mega-yacht harbor, this resort offers world-class accommodations, watersports, spa services, fitness and tennis centers and meeting facilities. From January 7, 2009 to April 17, 2009, nightly rates range from \$330 to \$805 (www.HarbourVillage.com)

The **Plaza Resort Bonaire** "has it all," according to Boudewijn Scholts, Director of Sales & Marketing. "About half our guests are divers (95% are from the U.S.), while the other half — mostly Europeans — come for general leisure." Affordable prices can be found at this upscale resort, which has the most number of beds and the largest meeting room on the island. In operation since 1995, The Plaza Resort Bonaire is currently undergoing a renovation and upgrading program (www.plazaresortbonaire.com).

JAXFAX attended a site inspection at the **Divi Flamingo Beach Resort**. The Divi properties throughout the Caribbean are known for their colorful décor, and everyone, children included, enjoyed the lively atmosphere at Divi Bonaire (www.diviresorts.com). Dining in Bonaire has become a culinary experience, and of special note are Divi's Chibi Chibi Restaurant, Bistro de Paris, It Rains Fishes, Patagonia, Cactus Blue and the Rum Runners at Captain Don's.

Bonaire is recognized for its commitment and leadership role in marine conservation and its proactive measures in protecting the environment. At the 10th Annual Sustainable Tourism Conference, held at Turks and Caicos, Bonaire received the prestigious Islands Magazine/Caribbean Tourism Organization 2008 Sustainable Tourism Award. In an impromptu interview with JAXFAX, Governor Herbert Domacasse stated that he was proud to have some of the best nature on earth. "But still," he continued, "the challenge is to keep it. It's important and crucial we do so."

Continental Airlines flies direct to Bonaire from Newark and Houston weekly. **Delta** introduced non-stop service to Bonaire from Atlanta weekly in February, 2008 and, starting December 20, 2008, the airline will offer non-stop service between JFK and Bonaire weekly, with a roundtrip fare of \$587.89. **American Airlines** flies from San Juan three times per week.

For more information, contact **Tourism Corporation Bonaire**, 800-BONAIRE or 212-956-5912; E-mail email: usa@tourismbonaire.com; www.tourismbonaire.com

SITA World Tours: Reaps the Rewards of Global Planning

By Maria Lisella

SITA World Tours has had a long history both abroad and in the U.S. Its product line covers Africa, Australia and New Zealand, Asia, India, South America, Greece, European and Russian River Cruises. The Ministry of Tourism India has named SITA twice as "Top Tour Operator to India from the Americas," an award the company is very proud of. JF spoke with **Roger Mahal**, Chairman and CEO, SITA World Group.

JF: Clearly SITA has grown from a specialist agency to a worldwide operation with programs on all the Continents and a huge diversity of products. What plans do you have for SITA in the next five years?

SITA: In the immediate future, SITA plans to consolidate and expand our product line within the existing, strong worldwide destinations. Over a period of five years we will selectively seek to enter new markets where there is a marked opportunity for growth such as Russia, Croatia and Israel. SITA World Tours has also made large investments in technology to provide Agents the tools to increase their business and more easily sell the destinations we offer.

JF: Anything new to announce to agents?

SITA: One of our newest and most in demand new products is SITA's Pre & Post Cruise extensions, which are offered in exotic ports such as Cairo, Cape Town, Dubai, Mumbai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro, to name a few.

JF: Will SITA be adding new partnerships with carriers for instance?

SITA: We recently signed a comprehensive tour operator and consolidation agreement with EVA Air, which has incredible penetration in the region

with its hub based in Taipei.

To enhance this newest partnership, SITA has created tour and stopover packages in Taiwan. A country that is diverse in its culture, cuisine and its spectacular sites.

JF: How strong are agent sales recently?

SITA: Despite economic matters, we have witnessed a healthy increase in Travel Agent sales in 2008. Additionally, several consortiums have designated SITA as a Preferred Supplier, thereby strengthening our bond with the travel agent community.

JF: What has your history been with agents - do they seek SITA for consolidated airfares initially and then learn of your big portfolio?

SITA: Our history with Agents dates back to the mid-1930's when we began offering Around the World programs and even bicycle tours within Europe. We also provide Air, due to our many contracts with prestigious Airlines worldwide.

JF: Does SITA run educational programs for agents?

SITA: Yes, SITA offers educational programs throughout the year, including to destinations such as Kenya, South Africa, India, China, Vietnam, Egypt and Brazil. These programs allow us to demonstrate the level of service provided to all our travelers and with these programs always joined by a key person within SITA management, it ensures enduring relationships with the Agents who attend.

JF: Do you sell programs with land-only prices or with airfares?

SITA: We provide both. Our 2009 brochure products include internal air (where noted), however, the International airfare is quoted separately.



Many of SITA's specials, which can be found on the web at www.sitatours.com, offer special pricing for both Land & Air.

JF: Have you noticed many clients coming to you directly via the internet or are SITA products so often booked with deviations that the programs are best sold via agents?

SITA: The complexity of our product is best served by working with a local travel agent and we encourage consumers to do so. At the same time, since the destinations we offer may not readily be known by the Agent, we offer the service of working with the traveler directly so to finalize their travel itinerary- all the while, properly protecting the Agent's commissions. This is a good example of why Agents seek out SITA while others are just getting to know us.

JF: In terms of the immediate year - 2009 - which looks like a challenging one, how will you keep the flow of business up?

SITA: Our dedicated team of travel specialists has crafted products that offer excellent value for the year 2009. We will continue to monitor the economic climate and react swiftly to ensure SITA's products remain competitive and value driven.

SITA's North American offices are headquartered in Los Angeles, with offices in New York, Houston, Chicago, Toronto, and Vancouver - an international office is located in New Delhi, India.

Call 800-421-5643; or visit www.sitatours.com

Profiting from Shore Excursions



Crystal Cruises Symphony in Portofino Italy

The winds of change are sweeping through the cruise industry as major lines enhance the cruise experience by offering guests a greater variety of shore excursions as well as providing more customized tours and unusual theme tours. Expansion of the Internet to cover all aspects of cruising make it easier and more convenient than ever for agents to book shore excursions for clients prior to departure.

The More The Merrier

"We are now offering around 1,800 excursions worldwide that provide our guests with far more options than were available just a few years ago," says **David Llewellyn**, associate vice president of shore excursions for **Royal Caribbean International (RCI)** and **Celebrity Cruises**.

"We have also developed a series of escorted excursions and tours targeting upscale clients accommodating a limited number of participants (four to eight)." For example, excursions are available on RCI's European itineraries costing around \$350 per person featuring a personal guide who accompanies small groups on visits to five star restaurants and sailings on a private yacht.

The expanded Alaska lineup of tours includes whale watching, gold panning, fly fishing, canoeing and kayaking. Flight seeing has always been especially popular in Alaska, and there will be several unique options available in 2009 such as "Four Glacier Adventure via Helicopter", "Mendenhall Glacier: Ice Age by Helicopter" "Juneau Icefield & Glacier Flight seeing by Floatplane", and "Glacier Dogsled Adventure via Helicopter."

Prices for Juneau tours range from \$31 (per person) for a "Gold Creek Salmon Bake" to \$489 for an "Extended Helicopter Glacier Trek." Llewellyn notes that agents are increasingly booking excursions in advance by contacting www.royalcaribbean.com, which lists detailed descriptions of individual tours as well as booking instructions.

"The website simplifies the process for both agents and clients who no longer have to wade through brochures con-

By Jonathan Siskin

taining hundreds of ports of call and excursion descriptions. Besides booking excursions online prior to boarding the ship, guests can pay in their own currency—(i.e. Americans pay in dollars, Europeans in Euros and Australians in Australian dollars, etc.). While it is still possible to book excursions after guests are onboard, our latest statistics show more than 50% of all excursions are being made in

advance," says Llewellyn.

Keeping Pace

Holland America is another major cruise line offering more diversity of excursions along with additional customized tours. For example, more than 70 excursions available at the four ports of call on a typical seven day Caribbean itinerary—Key West, Cozumel, Grand Cayman and Half Moon Cay.

As a result, clients can select from an average of 18 excursions available at each port that run the gamut from traditional sightseeing tours via motor coach to more active pursuits such as SCUBA diving, parasailing, deep sea fishing and a tropical kayak adventure. Like RCI, **Holland America Lines (HAL)** has developed an online booking system which can be accessed at www.hollandamerica.com

Agents can use clients' credit card information and booking number to request and pay for excursions and receive confirmed tour departure times as early as 60 days prior to sailing. "We are taking steps to make all aspects of Holland America's cruise experience as convenient as possible," says **David Giersdorf**, senior vice president of marketing and sales. "The major advantage of online booking is that guests can plan their complete cruise vacation in advance and ensure that all the tours and activities they wish to participate in during their sailing are available."

HAL has also expanded its "Medallion Special Selection" shore excursions that offer unusual experiences with a personal touch." For example, during a call at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on a New England/Canada itinerary a Medallion excursion offers the rare opportunity to become a "soldier for a day," says HAL spokesperson **Erik Elvejord**. Guests who sign up for this excursion participate in a day-long program during which they don a kilt uniform and are instructed on marching techniques. They also learn how to load and fire cannons and take part in Halifax's famed Citadel re-enactment ceremony.

"In essence our guests become participants in a major Halifax tourist attraction which is often attended by many fellow passengers," notes Elvejord who himself became a



Holland America MS Statendam in Honolulu



Royal Caribbean Explorer of the Seas

While it is still possible to book excursions after guests are onboard, our latest statistics show more than 50% of all excursions are being made in advance," — David Llewellyn

"soldier for a day" on a recent cruise. Other Medallion trips on HAL's Canada/New England cruises take guests sailing the pristine Bras d'Or Lakes on Cape Breton Island and experience life in 1744 through a behind-the-scenes look at the fortress Louisbourg near Sydney, Nova Scotia. They can also explore Quebec City on an intimate walking tour with a Quebecois guide, concluding with a high tea at the historic Chateau Frontenac. Depending on the Medallion excursion selected prices range from \$49 to \$249 per person double.

NAME OF THE GAME: EXCLUSIVITY



Seabourn Cruise

Exclusivity is the name of the game in regard to a new approach to shore excursions employed by upmarket lines such as **Silversea** and **Seabourn**. "We aim to maintain Silversea's high standards by offering excursions over and above what is available on the mainstream cruise lines. Many programs that we have introduced in recent years are built around cultural, art, and architecture themes, and wine tours are also quite popular with our guests," says **Jim Droney**, Silversea's Director of Land Programs. Silversea's wine tours, which include lunch at top-of-the-line restaurants, are available in some of the world's best know wine regions such as Tuscany and Bordeaux. Silversea is also adding a new series of cooking tours in France featuring guest chefs.

Specialty tours can also be tailored to accommodate various individual requests. "For example, our tour office facilitates arrangements for helicopter tour over Mt. Etna", says Droney. Guests sailing on Silversea's South America itinerary featuring a call at Punta Arenas, Chile, can book an excursion via private jet to Antarctica. "While it is one of our pricier excursions at \$2,200 per person, the Antarctica flight and landing was a sellout every time it was offered last year." Other pre and post cruise land programs in South America include a three night visit to Easter Island and a two night stay in an Amazon lodge in Iquitos, Peru.

Helicopters, MIGs and Witchcraft

Seabourn has also introduced more customized tours to accommodate special requests. "More than 20% of our guests opt to take a customized tour during a **Seabourn Cruise** and these programs can range from a private tour by car to an over-land experience which allows guests to leave the ship and rejoin the cruise two days later," says **Alberto Albierti**, Seabourn's manager "Since we have a large number of repeaters and are familiar with the interests of many of our guests, our tour manager often tailors private tour to meet their individual preferences," he says. As an example, Albierti refers to an exotic excursion offered in New Zealand where a helicopter lands at the pier, picks up a couple and flies them to a near-by glacier where they can chop some ice and meander about on the surface before returning to the ship. Seabourn offers



Silversea Cruise

kayak and bicycle tours upon request. The priciest tour currently being offered by Seabourn is among the most outlandish ever conceived: a flight in a Russian MIG where the guest goes to

Moscow and receives flight training before heading off into the wild blue yonder. "This one is priced just below five figures at \$9,999—while we haven't had anyone book this tour yet, we expect one of our guests will be signing up in the not too distant future."

Speaking of new, unique and unusual, **Crystal Cruises** is offering 75 new land programs including 19 new shore excursions on its New England cruises aboard the Crystal Symphony. According to **Tony Nizetich**, Crystal's supervisor of shore excursions, "From lobster bakes to witchcraft tales to more active pursuits such as river rafting, our new land programs offer a fresh approach balancing guests' desire for cultural, historical and soft adventure experiences."

For those interested in the supernatural and other arcane activities mixing the scenic and the sinister, Crystal's Marblehead & Salem tour will delve into the events that led to the witchcraft hysteria that swept the region in 1692 as the tour includes a stop at the Salem Witch Museum for a dramatic reproduction of the witch trials.

For more information, contact **Cruise Lines International Association**, 754-224-2200; E-mail: info@cruising.org; www.cruising.org

IN THE NEWS

RSSC to Enhance Fleet

Regent Seven Seas Cruises announced that it will invest approximately \$40 million dollars to implement an extensive refurbishment of the line's all-suite vessels: Seven Seas Voyager®, Seven Seas Mariner®, and Seven Seas Navigator®. This investment is in addition to the \$20 million that was spent on the fleet over the past two years as the line re-branded under the Regent moniker. Refurbishments will start this month with the dry-dock of Seven Seas Voyager, followed by Seven Seas Mariner in Jan., 2009, and Seven Seas Navigator in 2010. Visit www.RSSC.com

Ruby Princess Sets Sail

The newest addition to the **Princess** fleet, Ruby Princess, was christened last month. From Fort Lauderdale on November 8, beginning a program of Western Caribbean sailings taking passengers to Ocho Rios, Grand Cayman, Cozumel and Princess Cays. Following her inaugural Caribbean season, the ship will offer a program of Mediterranean voyages in summer 2009. Visit www.princess.com

Hariworld Launches Airline Booking Engine

Hariworld launched a new unrivaled web-based airline booking engine allowing travel professionals to book contracted and published air fares to destinations worldwide.

The new booking engine provides travel professionals with access to more than 10 million fares to Europe, Asia, Africa, South America and beyond.

The travel agent can now complete an entire transaction with just a few clicks of the mouse. Travel agents can search for fares, choose the trip itinerary, book a trip, pay for tickets in 4 easy steps and add their own markup. Thereafter, they have the ability to track every ticketed booking as well as view and print their own invoices. All this can be done online in minutes. Membership is available to qualified travel professionals at no cost.

"Agents need access to state-of-the-art and user-friendly technology in order to provide their clients with the best fares and services available. I urge participants to view the booking engine and provide feedback so we can continue to enhance and meet your needs," says Prem Cohly, CEO.

For 40 years Hariworld has been catering to the travel community offering more seats on more airlines to more destinations at very competitive prices. From a modest beginning in 1968, Hariworld has grown into one of the country's most influential and respected Consolidator. "While our growth has been dramatic, with offices in New York, Chicago, Atlanta and San Francisco we have not sacrificed the personal, dedicated, professional attention to detail that has been the trademark of Hariworld since our inception," says Prem.

Sandals Partners with AARP

Sandals Resorts and Beaches Resorts are proud to announce their recent partnership with the esteemed AARP organization to offer its members exclusive savings and benefits when they book a Luxury Included® vacation at any one of the twelve Sandals Resorts and four Beaches Resorts located across the Caribbean. Through this new partnership, AARP members who book a Sandals Resorts or Beaches Resorts Luxury Included® Vacation will receive a resort credit of up to \$125; year-round packages created especially for members; and a 10 percent discount on all resort shop purchases, exclusive Red Lane Spa treatments, and Snap Shots photography purchases. Call 866-498-3218; www.sandals.com/aarp

Luxury Partners with Children's Charity

Travel with Conscience is setting new trends in luxury travel by combining fabulous vacations with support for local destinations they cover. The company has recently partnered with the Saigon Children's Charity (SCC) in Southern Vietnam, a 501(c)(3) organization to help disadvantaged Vietnamese children get an education. Coupled with visiting Vietnam's most impressive sights, travelers have an opportunity to support local communities. www.saiгонchildren.com

Travel with Conscience, based out of Rochester NY, is among the companies embracing travel philanthropy and sustainable travel, with luxury vacations. Clients can custom-design travel matching their special interests with visits to various projects in: Costa Rica, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and India.

Call 800-655-3403; info@travelwithconscience.com; www.travelwithconscience.com

OneSimCard.com Intros Agent Program

Onesimcard.com the international cellular phone service has recently launched its Travel pro agent program.

The Boston-based international mobile phone services company, provides international phone service in more than 150 countries throughout the world, and is now offering a commission based program to the travel industry.

The company offers complete services including discount international mobile calling rates, handset sales and rentals along with top-tier customer support and advice departments. The demand for international cell phone service has paralleled the growth of cell phone usage in the U.S. as more people try to stay connected while on vacation and business overseas. However, it can become quite confusing when responding to travel clients questions regarding U.S. phones and phone service compatibility while travelling overseas. Onesim card will answer all your client's questions honestly and professionally in addition to finding the most cost-effective products for their life style and overseas trips. The travel pro program requires a simple online agent registration.

The agent simply refers their client to OneSimCard website through a link on their travel site, or our sales division with their agent number. Commissions are volume-based starting at 10%; and are paid upon all purchases and airtime.

Agents are given a sales and commission page where they can look at their sales and commissions at any time. The real strength of this program is that commissions are paid for the life of the account not just the initial transaction, allowing the agent to grow their commissions with out the need to re refer the customer.

Call Christopher Newbury, 800 640 2599 ext: 115; E-mail Chris@ldpost.com; www.onesimcard.com

EagleRider Finances Harley Dreams

EagleRider, the world's largest motorcycle rental company, today announces a new program with GE Capital Solutions, Commercial Distribution Finance (CDF) to offer qualified motorcycle dealerships 100% floorplan financing on purchases of used, factory stock motorcycles with up to six months of no interest and no payments.

EagleRider Finance offers a competitive used motorcycle financing program to help credit squeezed dealerships acquire used motorcycle inventory for their dealership. Approved dealers who take advantage of this new program can acquire inventory without paying interest or payments for up to 180 days. EagleRider has over 1,000 late-model factory stock used motorcycles from Harley-Davidson®, Honda and BMW available for sale at warehouse prices.

Call 888-605-6234; E-mail wholesale@eaglerider.com

Agent Incentive from Martinique

Martinique's La Batelière Hotel is rolling out the red carpet for travel agents this fall by offering a special Fam rate of \$143 per-room, per-night (single or double occupancy) for superior category rooms. Rates include daily buffet breakfast and are valid on hotel stays through December 15, 2008 subject to space availability. For reservations and information, E-mail Corinne Picaut at corinne.picaut@orange.fr Visit www.martinique.org

National Trade Shows, Inc.

Bringing Travel Agents and Suppliers Together for 35 Years

COMING NOW TO A CITY NEAR YOU!



BE OUR GUEST for dinner, open bar, education, and a chance to improve your bottom line

FREE OF COST! DOOR PRIZES

COME JOIN US and get the latest updates & packages from our **EXHIBITORS** representing the entire travel industry:

CRUISE LINES, RESORTS, CARRIERS, TOURIST BOARDS, CONVENTION & VISITORS' BUREAUS, TOUR OPERATORS AND HOTEL CHAINS...

National Trade Shows, Inc. presents the "original" mini-trade/dinner shows

FEBRUARY 17 thru FEBRUARY 20

Schaumburg, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Northbrook, Illinois; Oak Lawn, Illinois

FEBRUARY 23 thru FEBRUARY 26

Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Knoxville, Tennessee; Nashville, Tennessee

MARCH 02 thru MARCH 05

Cocoa Beach, Florida; West Palm Beach, Florida; Fort Myers, Florida; St. Petersburg, Florida

MARCH 16 thru MARCH 19

Houston, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; Austin, Texas; Dallas, Texas

MARCH 23 thru MARCH 26

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Langhorne, Pennsylvania; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Cherry Hill, New Jersey

MARCH 30 thru APRIL 02

Morris/Passaic County, New Jersey; Bergen County, New Jersey; N.J. Shore Area; Edison, New Jersey

For additional venues in 2008-2009, please visit our website.

Function starts at 6:00 PM with 1 hour exhibit period. Bar open from 6 to 9 PM.

Dinner served at 7:00 PM. 8:00 PM suppliers presentation and give away prizes

**SPRING
2009**

**Registration online at
www.ntshows.com**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR

- A list of last season's suppliers.
- A complete list of cities locations.

For further assistance and registration call (800) 526-0041 • (973) 835-1340 or email us at info@ntshows.com.

Selling Travel in Tough Economic Times—

Continue from page 6

victims of this economic downturn. This very magazine is another great resource for travel deals. Not only are our listings pages full of discounted consolidator airfares but each of our editorial geographic sections have multiple “Best Buys”. Traditionally, these best buys have been more about “good value” than great deals. However, in the months to come, our editorial team is going to search for the “outrageous bargains” for our best buys, because this is what we believe is going to stimulate travel.

Your job as agents will be to find creative ways to get this “too good to refuse” vacation opportunities into your clients hands. Think outside the box! Yes, emails are cheap and quick but like we just discussed, the tendency is to delete

those unknown emails that make it past spam filters. If you do send emails, make sure the subject line will catch your client’s attention. Talk about all the great travel deals whenever possible whether it be at your child’s soccer game or at a cocktail party with friends. Find any and all ways to let everyone know that now is the time to take advantage of these “once in a lifetime” bargains. Only by doing so will you ensure your future and the future of the suppliers who still depend on travel agents to move their products.

From the entire JAX FAX Staff and myself, we wish all of you a very safe and joy-filled Holiday Season and a healthy and prosperous New Year!

Douglas Cooke, CTC, Publisher



IS 2 PUBLICATIONS IN 1

The front half of each issue consists of destination articles and supplier updates.

FEATURE STORIES

Written by leading travel writers and on-site correspondents. Edited to provide travel agents with the information needed to sell the featured worldwide destinations. Provides the contact information to reach the suppliers mentioned in the story. Includes maps, photos and quick reference info. box to bring the desti-

nation to life.

SUPPLIER UPDATES

Arranged in 11 editorial department for easy reference including: USA/Canada, Europe, the Caribbean & Bermuda, Central & South America, Africa & Eastern Med, Asia & the South Pacific.

News briefs provides the latest offerings from

The second half of each issue consists of consolidator air and tour package listings.

HOW TO USE JAX FAX LISTINGS SECTION

LISTINGS ARE COLOR CODED	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	KEY
	TRIP	#	ROUND TRIP PRICE					VALIDITY		
	DEPARTING	DAYS	MIN	MAX	SUPPLIER			PERIOD	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	LABELS
	TYPE									
	BRITAIN									COUNTRY
	NEW YORK									CITY FROM/TO
	DAILY	SKED AIR		\$ 228	Net	\$ 508	AIRPLAN, INC.	1/1/07-10/31/07	800-866-7526 OR WWW.AIR	
	DAILY	SKED AIR		\$ 375	Net		AMTRAVEL CORPORATION	1/1/07-3/31/07	TAXES XTRA;CALL 973-373-	
	DAILY	BUSINESS		\$ 1950	Net	\$ 3650	ARROW TRAVEL	ALL YEAR	CALL FOR OTHER CITIES;8	
	DAILY	SKED TUR	4	\$ 445		\$ 695	EUROGROUPS	LOW SEASON	3N STC HTL;800-462-2577;S	
	THURS	SKED TUR	9	\$ 1884		\$ 2280	CIE TOURS INTERNATIONAL	5/12/07-10/13/07	BRITISH SPLENDOR;ALL U	

- A DEPARTING:** Specific dates of departure (i.e., FEB 13).
Departure on numbered days of the week: 1 = MON, 2 = TUE, 3 = WED, 4 = THR, 5 = FRI, 6 = SAT, 7 = SUN • Generic terms (MINTL, DAILY)
- B TRIP TYPE:** SKED AIR = Round trip **AIR ONLY** via scheduled airline
CHTR AIR = Round trip **AIR ONLY** via charter airline
SKED TUR = Round trip **air & land** package via scheduled airline
APT AIR = Apartment package **with round-trip air**
VILA AIR = Villa package **with round-trip air**
RENT CAR = Car rental package. **Air additional.**
TOUR PKG = Motorcoach package. **Air additional.**
HTL PKG = Hotel/land package. **Air additional.**
APT PKG = Apartment package. **Air additional.**
VILA PKG = Villa package. **Air additional.**
BUSINESS = Business class **air only**
FIRST = First class **air only**
CRUZ PKG = Cruise accommodations **only. Air additional.**
- C # OF DAYS:** Number of days for tours, flights or hotel packages with specific durations. (Number of **nights**: usually one less).

- D MINIMUM PRICE:** Lowest quoted price within validity period. Restrictions may apply. Availability of seats limited. Must be applicable within 45 days unless otherwise stated. If **flights are included, the fare is round-trip.** If rooms are included, price is per person/double occupancy (PP/DO).
- E NET:** The word **NET** between the MIN and MAX Fares indicates that travel agents pay the supplier the full displayed (or agreed) fare and add whatever they feel their compensation should be when billing clients.
- F MAXIMUM PRICE:** Highest quoted price *during* validity period.
- G SUPPLIER:** Contact information, including (800) and local phone numbers, can be found in our ADVERTISERS AND LISTERS DIRECTORY (last 8 pages of the book).
- H VALIDITY:** Time span for quoted prices
- I ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Details from supplier
- NOTICE TO TRAVEL AGENTS:** The listings displayed in JAX FAX may or may not include all of the government taxes/fees, airport facility fees and airline security charges, since these will vary depending upon the airline(s) used and the specific route flown for the ticket(s) actually purchased. Travel agents are hereby advised that the U.S. Department of Transportation requires that consumers be advised of the total amount of applicable taxes, fees and charges before the ticket sale is consummated. Be sure to determine from the wholesaler what the applicable amount is and advise your clients. —The Publisher

MarketPlace

ADVERTISE IN THIS DIRECTORY
CALL KATIE AT 203-301-0255.

AIR CHARTER BROKERS

Air Brokerage International

800-494-7886 • www.airbrokerage.com

Aircraft charter and leasing service for travel agents, tour operators, special interest/affinity groups, executive charters, cruise lines, government agencies and air carriers worldwide.

Contact Steve Berger: steve@airbrokerage.com

7947 Ragoon Hollow Court, Pleasanton, CA 94588;
FAX: 925-417-1341

CUSTOMIZED GROUP TOURS

EUROPE & SOUTH AMERICA

Tumlare Corporation

1-800-954-6713 • www.Tumlare.com
978-579-0020, Fax 978-579-0883; BOS@tumlare.com
615 Boston Post Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

Tumlare is one of the largest and leading inbound tour operators in the world with offices all over Europe and South America providing excellent quality and value. Special interest, historical, MICE, pilgrimages; sightseeing, private shore excursions are a specialty, wholesale FIT, Oberammergau 2010. Let our local expert staff serve you with professional first hand knowledge ensuring quality satisfaction.

Scandinavia, the Baltic's, Russia, Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Europe, South America.
BUY DIRECT, HAVE CONTROL, QUALITY AND VALUE.

AIR CHARTER ESCROW DEPOSITORY BANKS

National City Bank

Contact: David Valpredo: 248-729-8375
www.nationalcity.com/corporate

Leading depository escrow bank for public air charters, private charters, special purpose depository escrow agreements, surety trust agreements, standby letters of credit, Travel Funds Protection Plan (TFPP) and more. Our clients include: charter operators, air carriers, charter brokers, travel agents, cruise lines, wholesale tour operators and participating ground vendors. Domestic and international coverage.

Fax: 248-729-8803. David.Valpredo@nationalcity.com
755 West Big Beaver, Suite 1400, Troy, MI 48084

CUSTOM TOURS - WOMEN ONLY TRAVEL

Cotswolds, York, Lincoln and Bath,

BRITISH HERITAGE TOURS

TOLL FREE TO THE UK: 800-964-2819

Email: pauli@bhtours.co.uk • www.bhtours.co.uk

Sheer indulgence at the Thermae Bath Spa, a chocolate experience, antiquing in the Cotswolds, Christmas Markets in York, Lincoln and Bath, 'Fly to China' the breakable kind at Wedgwood, Spode and Portmeirion.

Richmond Place, 125 Boughton, Chester CH3 5BH, UK
Fax: 01144 (0)1244 320072

PRIVATE GROUP SHORE EXCURSIONS

Tumlare Corporation

1-800-579-0020 • www.Tumlare.com
978-579-0020, Fax 978-579-0883; BOS@tumlare.com
615 Boston Post Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

Tumlare is a leading inbound tour operator to Europe. As one of the first companies to operate private shore excursions for groups we have the experience, knowledge, quality, and direct pricing to make your next group exceed on land as well as ocean. With local offices in most European cruise ports we handle group requests from 10-2000 guests. Take advantage of local expertise, guides and wholesale pricing.

Scandinavia, the Baltic's, Russia, Eastern, Central, Western and Southern Europe, South America.
BUY DIRECT, HAVE CONTROL, QUALITY AND VALUE.

SPECIAL INTEREST TOURS

Customized F.I.T.S & Group Tours to ITALY

VISIT ITALY TOURS

800-255-3537 • www.VisitItalyTours.com
310-649-9080, Fax 310-649-6880, info@VisitItalyTours.com
9841 Airport Blvd. Suite 1424, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Visit Italy Tours is Italy's finest Tour Operator specializing in F.I.T.S and custom designed tours to Italy. No one does Italy like us from the cultural capitals of Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Milan and Palermo or the minor art cities of Siena, San Gimignano, Assisi, Cortona, and Taormina. Choose from our vast selection of hotels, car rentals, chauffeur driven services, rail, gourmet food and wine itineraries, romantic escapades, pre and post cruise programs. Our expert staff caters to both individuals and group travel.

FamiliarizationTrips

EGYPT

Cairo, Aswan, Luxor and Alexandria: the fam you've been waiting for.

Air from New York, 4 day/ 3 night Five Star DELUXE Nile cruise, All meals (from departure at JFK til return), tips for ground personnel and a special bonus of 20% commissions on all bookings after you go on the fam! Visiting the pyramids, King Tut's treasures, temples along the Nile and the city Alexander the Great built and Cleopatra made famous. Comfort of luxury hotels and cruise. Shop at carpet factories, cotton goods stores, the famous spice market in Aswan, papyrus shops, jewelry stores and more. Space is limited and this is the only Travel Egypt fam scheduled for 2009. Agents pay \$1495 (plus air ticket taxes) while companions are \$1695 (plus air ticket taxes).

Travel Egypt: www.travelegypt.com/oct07fam.htm or call 877-778-3497. travelegyptusa@gmail.com

EUROPE AND CHINA

River Cruises & Cruise Tours through Europe, Russia, Ukraine and China

FAM start at Just \$499 and include all meals, daily excursions and guided tours, cultural highlights such as lectures, folkloric entertainment and theme dinners and visits to historic and popular attractions: Waterways of the Czars – 13 days, St. Petersburg to Moscow on the newly renovated Viking Surkov, October 2, 2008 – just \$999 .Footsteps of the Cossack – 11 days, Kiev to Odessa on Viking Lavrinenkov, October 5, 2008 – just \$699. Grand European Tour – 15 days, Amsterdam to Budapest (or reverse) on Viking Danube, Viking Spirit, Viking Sky or Viking Pride, October 19, October 26, November 2 – just \$999. Switzerland to Belgium – 15 days, Basel to Antwerp (or reverse) on Viking Sun, November 16 or December 14 – just \$999 .Rhine Getaway – 8 days, Amsterdam to Basel on Viking Sun, December 7 – just \$499

Viking River Cruises 877-668-4546 or www.vikingrivercruises.com.

GREECE & THE GREEK ISLANDS

Athens, Greek Islands & Turkey Cruise

9 Days, 3 Nights Greece & 4 Nights Greek Islands & Turkey Cruise \$1,299 ppdo + Tax. Non-stop flight on Olympic Airlines R/T from NY-JFK to Athens, transfers, 3 nights at a 5-star Athens hotel with breakfast daily, and a 5 day/4 night cruise to the Greek Islands and Turkey. 4* Superior Titania Hotel . 5 days / 4 nights Golden Classics Cruise to the Greek Islands and Turkey aboard the M/V Aquamarine of Louis Cruises. Option Tours available.

Aegean Mediterranean Cruises 888-968-0335, www.aegeanmedtours.com

INDIA

Delhi-Agra-Ranthambore-Jaipur

Air and land all Inclusive fam tours from \$1695. Weekly departure. Includes R/T air on major carriers from US & Canadian gateways. Two one-week options: The Gold Fam includes Delhi-Agra-Ranthambore-Jaipur and the Green Fam covers Mumbai-Kochi-Periyar-Kumarakom. Combinations and extensions available. The Tours are leaving every Thursday of the week. Email Ram Chopra at Ramchopra@incrediblevacationsindia.com

SANS Incredible Vacations: 212-695-1005 sans@sansincrediblevacations.com

TANZANIA

The Best of Tanzania National Parks via Cairo

Tanzania safari adventure with a fabulous taste of ancient Egyptian history. 12-day FAM from Oct 30 – Nov 10, 2008, includes visits to Tarangire National Park, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, and Serengeti National Park, daily game drives in the parks in a 4WD private land rover with professional guide/driver, window seat assured, a guided tour of the Great Pyramids of Giza and the legendary Sphinx in Cairo, Egypt. Price is \$3,638 and includes international and domestic airfare; deluxe accommodations; most meals; professional HLO escort; group transfers; tour and park fees; hotel site inspections; and luggage handling. Companion rates are \$3,963. Land only from Nov. 1-7 in Tanzania is \$1,563.(Minimum 6 participants)

HLO Tours, Inc: 800-736-4456, hlotours@yahoo.com.