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These are weekday, "Basic" season net airfares valid for travel between September 01 - Dec 15, 2008.

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WAS	\$317	\$397	\$388	\$396	\$310

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SFO	\$1424	\$1372	\$1066	\$1171	\$1066	\$1317	\$1232
LAX	\$1246	\$1194	\$1033	\$1014	\$1066	\$1149	\$1149
HOU	\$1246	\$1199	\$975	\$975	\$786	\$1192	\$1091

Fares above represent USD, All week, Round trip Net fares, Departures by October 23, 2008.

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LAX	\$4393	\$3961	\$4610	\$4356	\$4881
HOU	\$4393	\$3961	\$4393	\$4356	\$4664

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DESTINATION FEATURES AND ARTICLES

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Live out your dreams of being castaway on a tropical island

Rarotonga. Aitutaki. Manihiki. Rakahanga. The Cook Islands, scattered across the sea like a string of pearls, are the essence of the magical South Pacific. They represent a destination in which to live out daydreams of being castaway on a tropical island – complete with room service, internet, and, possibly, the warmest welcome in the Pacific. With the 13th series of the reality show “Survivor” these islands...

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Even though beaches, a whopping 365 of them, play a major role in attracting visitors to their islands, government officials in Antigua and Barbuda are looking to festivals and special events to perk up...



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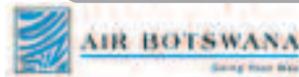


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A La Carte Airline Travel Pricing? or What is the Actual Cost of an Airline Ticket?

It's vacation time for the Publisher, so I am pulling a Pub Page out of the archives (April 06 to be exact). I had fun writing this then and it is more relevant today. I could not

have predicted two years ago that oil would cost over \$100 a barrel leading to additional fuel surcharges and record losses for domestic carriers. Consider that some carriers are now, in addition to fuel surcharges, charging \$2 for soda while others are charging \$7 for a blanket and pillow. You will find that many of my flippant predictions have actually been adopted by the airlines. As for the rest, stay tuned!

It is no secret that most airlines in the United States are continuing to struggle with their balance sheets and are looking for ways to boost their revenues. With the advent of internet pricing and of low cost carriers, the major airlines must look for new creative ways to eek a few more dollars out of their customers. Northwest airlines has just announced their intention to charge a \$15 premium for preferred seats (aisle near the front and emergency exit rows). One can only wonder what is next on the horizon. In the not to distant future a typical travel experience might go something like this:

You arrive at the airport with \$275 ticket in hand for a JFK-LAX flight. You think you have gotten a good deal right? After all, this non-stop only cost you \$25 more than a connection would have. As you step up to the automated check in kiosk the first

thing you encounter is a message on the screen announcing a \$5 charge for the convenience of using the automated check in. You glance over at the line of 50 or so people waiting to check in at the counter and figure \$5 is well worth the timesavings.

After the machine has retrieved your record it prompts you to select seats and a seat map appears. As you peruse the map you notice something different. Every seat has a colored background with a color key next to the seating chart. You quickly surmise that any seat in the front half of the plane carries a \$5 surcharge. Additionally all aisle and emergency row seats have a \$15 surcharge and all windows a \$10 surcharge. Of course, not wanting to be stuck in a center seat for 5 hours you compromise and select a window seat in the back of the plane.

After selecting your seat you proceed to the baggage check screen. Here you learn that there is a \$10 charge for checking your first bag and \$5 additional for the second. If you have no baggage to check, but have a carry on too large to fit under the seat, you must buy an overhead storage space for \$15. Since you already compromised on your seat assignment you figure the extra \$5 is worth carrying your small bag on and pay the \$15 for the overhead space.

The final screen before you receive your boarding pass offers you priority boarding for an additional \$10. You decline since

Continued on page 47



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Network Effect Keeps on Giving

Certain species of trees such as the aspen sprout from a single seedling that can grow to nourish and protect an entire colony of aspens through a common root system. They are also very often the first species of tree to return following a wild fire or other natural disaster. This characteristic makes aspens both the largest species in the world [one interconnected aspen root system in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah reportedly generates nearly 50,000 trees spread over 4.6 million square feet] and the oldest [one colony is estimated to be more than 80,000 years old]. But, if the seedling fails to generate a root system, even this mighty species will not last through its first winter. New studies indicate that people are similarly dependent on vibrant, energetic and stimulating networks.

In fact, we all need deep roots and when we have lost our way, we search for our roots to help create strong support systems, nourishing our initial impulses to grow and flourish from season to season and from economic windfalls to economic meltdowns.

What can be said on a personal level, applies most obviously to our professional lives, too. American culture often

lionizes the lonesome traveler, the singular pioneer, the heroic individual, but that thinking is myopic, maybe a little romantic in some ways, but is a set up for disaster. That sort of thinking corners us into a right angle with nowhere to go or to turn to in difficult times like right now.

Groups play a huge role in our survival and in our growth as people and professionals. Teams of scientists sent men to the moon for the first time in 1969. My father, a modest man, designed the landing gear and wrote the manual on how to get the LEM up and return it to planet earth. As awed as I was by his contribution, he always pointed out just how small his part was within the universe of that venture. The commemorative posters attest to that: they are a constellation of hundreds of signatures of those who played a role in that first step on the moon.

So, while your phone may not be ringing off the hook in its usual way, dial or text that colleague you met at the last PATA party or SATW, NYTWA, NTA, or vacation.com conference and use the time wisely—to connect.

The trail blazer myth is just that, it blinds you to the existence of others. As much as we love a hero or heroine, we also need that concentric circle that involves reciprocity, helping ideas gain momentum.

Maria Lisella, Editor



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Snapshots

THE MONTH IN REVIEW

ATS Gets Royal Treatment in Jordan

Alex Harris, CTC, Honorary Chairman, American Tourism Society (ATS), and Chairman, General Tours, was among the distinguished guests invited to The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to attend the Petra IV Conference of Nobel Laureates held in Petra, Jordan, June 17-19, 2008.



His Majesty King Abdullah II co-hosted the event with Elie Wiesel, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. More than 30 Nobel Laureates were among the guests at this fourth conference which this year focused on "reaching for new economic, scientific and educational horizons."

Nobel Laureates were among the guests at this fourth conference which this year focused on "reaching for new economic, scientific and educational horizons."

El Al Announces Codeshare with AA

Pictured below (L to R) – Maria Sebastian, Vice President Sales and Marketing, Europe, Middle East and Africa, American Airlines; Professor Israel (Izzy) Borovich, Chairman of the Board, EL AL Israel Airlines; and Haim Romano, President of EL AL Israel Airlines.



Dominica World Creole Music Festival

Hon. Minister of Tourism, Legal Affairs and Civil Aviation Ian Douglas speaking at the 12th Annual Dominica World Creole Music Festival while seated at the head table next to him are (L to R) Ambassador Crispin Gregoire, Executive Events Director of the Dominica Festivals Committee Val Cuffy and Director of Tourism for the Discover Dominica Tourism Authority Steve Bornn. Steve Bornn is also Chairman of the Dominica Festivals Committee.



African Travel Association

Vivienne Willison, Sales Director for the Malta-based hotel operators CHI Hotels and Resorts (formerly Corinthia Hotels International) was elected as a Vice President of the International Board of Directors of the Africa Travel Association (ATA) at its 33rd International Conference which took place in Arusha, Tanzania.



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The Cook Islands:

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By Ann and Tom Burgess



Rarotonga. Aitutaki. Manihiki. Rakahanga. The Cook Islands, scattered across the sea like a string of pearls, are the essence of the magical South Pacific.

They represent a destination in which to live out daydreams of being castaway on a tropical island – complete with room service, internet, and, possibly, the warmest welcome in the Pacific. With the 13th series of the reality show “Survivor” these islands have attained celebrity status, but clients will not have to worry about surviving their vacations.

Spread across 1.3 million square miles of the South Pacific, the Cook Islands account for about 150 square miles of landmass, presenting a challenge to visitors who think they want to see all of the islands. First-time visitors usually concentrate their travels in the “Southern Group” of the Cook Islands that includes the two more populated and larger islands of Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

The “Northern Group” of the Cook Islands are only for clients who embrace a more rugged and hearty form of travel. For those looking to stray well off the

beaten path, these remote islands are just the place to immerse themselves in true Cook Island culture.

Balancing Culture and Technology

What we found so appealing about Rarotonga was the remarkable balance of traditional Polynesian hospitality with 21st century technology. The islands run with New Zealand graciousness and efficiency coupled with the inherent Cook Island hospitality, creating an atmosphere that genuinely welcomes and treats the visitor very well.

The Cook Islands are well-suited for a variety of travelers. Honeymooners will delight in the tropical ambiance, families with children will appreciate the gentle, low-key atmosphere for spending sun-filled days building sandcastles on pristine beaches and adventure seekers will be ecstatic with the range of water sports and hiking opportunities.

The major Cook Islands, Rarotonga and Aitutaki are about the same distance from the equator as Hawaii so, are similar in climate, with little humidity and pleasant trade winds. November to April is hurricane season; the Cook Islands report one

hurricane about every other year.

Unless they are truly seeking a rustic experience, most visitors will spend the majority of their time on the islands of either Rarotonga or Aitutaki. If you travel further away from these two major islands, especially to the Northern group, you will find very small populations and people living a mostly subsistence lifestyle.

The more remote group of Northern Islands especially require advance planning. A visitor must have accommodation arranged before a ticket to these islands may be purchased. Only Manihiki and Penryhn have guesthouses available and need to be reserved far in advance, and the accommodation is far from deluxe with no hot water and limited electricity available.

Waterbaby Activities

Sun, sand, snorkeling and water sports. Surrounded by a sparkling lagoon of tropical azure blue water, backed by beaches of bone white sand and lush coconut palms the beaches of the Cook Islands are among the most beautiful and unspoiled in the world. The south coast of Rarotonga is noted for the best beach-

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es and snorkelling spots. Here the reef is generally further out and the sea floor is relatively free of spiny corals and rocks.

But if you think your clients will be impressed by what's above the water line wait until you hear about the delights below the water. Snorkellers will return raving about the crystal clear and pleasantly warm waters filled with brightly colored exotic fish and corals. Most of the lagoon areas are sufficiently shallow to allow non-swimmers to wade out to the reef and still catch a glimpse of the sea life without gear or fear. Good choices for snorkelling include the channels in Muri Lagoon, Aro'a Beach, Tikioki Beach, and the beach by the Rarotongan Beach Resort.

For serious scuba divers, the Cook Islands are also an excellent choice. Outside of the reef, the water level drops sharply, to depths of up to 12,000 feet with lots of canyons, caves, tunnels and wrecks to explore. Rarotonga has several accredited diving operators including: **Cook Island Divers**, www.cookislandsdivers.com; and **Dive Rarotonga**, www.diverarotonga.com.

For a more leisurely and equally memorable water experience try a lagoon cruise. Glass-bottom boats are very popular on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki. The lagoon at Aitutaki is hard to beat for a viewing experience, filled with giant clams, the ones with the big wavy edges, schools of parrotfish and an abundance of coral.

Castaways By Design

Clients can create their own castaway (but easily rescued) adventure by taking a boat cruise to one of the many deserted "motus" (islets) for a picnic and snorkelling session.

For those eager to do more than lay on a beach, several tour companies offer varied experiences of the Cook Islands. **Raro Mountain Safari Tours**

offers three-hour tours in custom-built jeeps to sweep clients off the beaten paths and into the islands' rugged mountains and valleys. Visit www.rarosafaritours.co.ck

If clients prefer their viewing experiences to be from the comfort of an air-conditioned bus, **Raro Tours** operates half-day circle island tours. Visit www.rarotours.co.ck

If clients want to stay on Rarotonga, but experience another island, **Air Rarotonga** sells daytrips to Aitutaki that include an island tour, lagoon cruise with snorkelling, lunch, and time for swimming and sunning. The cost is about \$400 NZ or \$300US.

Go to Church

The early Christian missionaries exerted a powerful influence over the Cook Islanders and the locals responded. Most people regularly attend church services and this is far more than a religious ceremony. Locals turn out in their Sunday finery and will frown on those who attend in skimpy attire (a word of caution to clients). Visitors are welcomed to attend as services are filled with music and high spirits.

Local Tastes

Separated from most major population centers by thousands of miles of ocean visitors might expect that Rarotonga might not offer the same variety of meal options they have come to expect in more visited destinations. They would be wrong. Almost everything from sushi to pasta, even *lattes*, can be had here.

Traditional Cook Island cuisine includes fresh fish, pork, chicken and vegetables. Side dishes quite often include steamed taro leaves, taro and coconut. The ubiquitous island snack, *ika mata*, similar to a ceviche found in Latin countries, are strips of raw fish marinated in lime or lemon



juice and coconut cream can be found in almost every restaurant or snack shop. Advise clients to be cautious of foods containing coconut cream that appear to be anything less than fresh. Coconut cream spoils quickly in the heat and can cause quite a bit of digestive distress.

Accommodations on Rarotonga

Hotel facilities in Rarotonga and Aitutaki are well developed with many, if not more, of the amenities world travelers have come to expect.

As with all tropical establishments, however, the décor will be suited to withstand tropical conditions with materials, woods and fabrics that are climate-friendly to the local environ-

Fast Facts: Cook Islands

Language: Cook Island Maori is the official language but English is widely spoken.

Currency: the NZ dollar runs about \$1NZ to \$.75 US

Visa Requirements: None for a stay of up to 31 days provided visitors have an onward or return travel ticket.

Driving: Rarotonga has excellent bus service or you can rent a car, scooter or bicycle. For anything motorized you will need to purchase a Cook Islands drivers license.



ment. There are no mega-sized convention hotels and most of the companies running these establishments are New Zealand-owned, and not globally familiar, brand names. Many smaller hotels in the Cook Islands are reluctant to take children under the age of 12 so be sure to inquire if this is a consideration. Any accommodation with a thatched roof is going to be expensive-memorable and private, but pricey.

The **Little Polynesian Resort** has been a favorite in the Cook Islands for more than 30 years. There is an elegant simplicity to the accommodations, suited to a tropical lifestyle. The range of rooms includes duplex units, private bungalows and "ares" that extend over the beach areas. All of the accommodations have been constructed with high-pitched roofs that are indicative of traditional Cook Island style. This is truly a romantic and intimate getaway. Visit www.littlepolynesian.com

The **Rarotongan Beach Resort & Spa**, the largest hotel on the island, is decked out in the Hollywood version of Polynesia complete with tikis and other island paraphernalia. Rates range from \$270NZ or \$204US for a garden room to \$1,965NZ or \$1,485US for a three-bedroom villa with private pool. Included in the price are a welcome cocktail and island fruits, daily tropical buffet breakfast, loan of snorkel gear, hammocks, sun loungers, beach towels, and daily activities program. An added bonus is that hotel packages may be shared with the sister resort, the Aitu-

taki Lagoon Resort & Spa. Visit www.therarotongan.com

The **Pacific Resort Rarotonga** is an island favourite that manages to combine the personal service style of a small hotel with the facilities of a large property. The 64 self-contained units are set on beautiful Muri beach and a prettier setting is difficult to find. Rates start at \$370NZ or about \$28US for a garden studio unit and rise to \$1,660NZ or about \$1,255US for a two-bedroom beachfront villa. Included in the price are airport coach transfers, welcome cocktail, daily island breakfasts, and free use of snorkelling and beach gear. Visit www.pacificresort.com

Club Raro is a reasonably priced resort, with rates beginning at \$155NZ per night for a studio unit and rising to \$210 NZ per night for a lagoon front room. The décor is best described as Polynesian budget motel with simple, but colourful, furnishings. When booked online the rate includes a daily breakfast. A third person sharing a room is an additional \$70NZ per night. Visit www.clubraro.co.ck

Accommodations on Aitutaki

The **Pacific Resort Aitutaki** is a sister resort to the Pacific Resort Rarotonga, and, if possible, is even more intimate and romantic. Rack rates for a Garden Bungalow runs \$470 NZ or \$355US; an Overwater Bungalow, \$1,285NZ or \$971 US. Visit www.pacificresort.com/Aitutaki

The **Aitutaki Lagoon Resort & Spa** has 27 beachfront bungalows, suites and villas, all with their own view of Aitutaki's world famous lagoon. This resort is also the only private island resort in the Cook Islands. This is true luxury, with a price to match. Rates are

similar to the Pacific Resort Aitutaki. Visit www.aitutakilagoonresort.com

To experience Aitutaki without spending too much, arrange a daytrip from Rarotonga that includes the lagoon, a cruise and lunch.

Getting There

Air New Zealand operates direct services from Auckland, New Zealand. There is one direct flight a week, currently on Sunday, from Los Angeles to Rarotonga. Clients originating from the East and Midwest can connect in Los Angeles. **Pacific Blue** has twice weekly flights from Australia and New Zealand to Rarotonga.

Air Rarotonga has regularly scheduled flights to both Northern and Southern group islands. A flight to Aitutaki takes about 50 minutes.

Flights to the Cook Islands are usually heavily booked; your clients should be prepared to make air arrangements well in advance. There is an airport departure tax of \$30NZ or \$23US, which is not included in the ticket cost. **Rarotonga International Airport**, opened in 1974, is the main arrival point for visitors and is less than three miles from Avarua.

Clearly, visiting the Cook Islands requires advance planning, a strong desire to engage with nature, be receptive to a different culture and a commitment to preparing for the trip of a lifetime.

For more information, contact **Cook Islands Tourism Corporation**, 949-476-4086; fax 949-476-4088; E-mail usamanager@cook-islands.com; www.cookislands.travel

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to the Cook Islands see page 58 of the Listings Section

Korea Opens New Arts Centers and Festivals in Fall

Founded in 2001, Seoul Performing Arts Festival (SPAF) is one of Korea's biggest performing arts festivals and encompasses the works of both international and domestic contemporary works of drama, dance and interdisciplinary arts. It runs for one month, from mid-September to mid-October, at major venues throughout Seoul and is funded by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Arts Council Korea, the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Seoul Foundation for Arts & Culture.

SPAF is a festival that introduces cutting-edge, innovative and thought-provoking contemporary work. Over the past seven years, the event has presented more than 409 pieces (78 from overseas artists, 331 from domestic artists and auxiliary events). This year promises to be even better.

If clients are having trouble deciding which of the eight foreign performances to see, they can opt to see more than one. Visit <http://spaf21.com/2008/english/>

Alive Art Gallery Opens

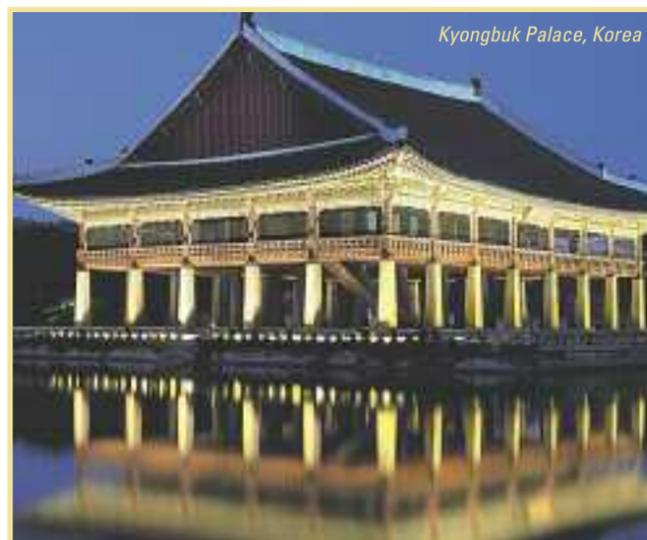
What do Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," Michelangelo's "The Creation of Heaven and Earth," and Andy Warhol's "Marilyn Monroe" all have in common? Well they, together with several other famous portraits, will be featured in a new event where visitors will be able to have conversations with the respective artists mimicking through various screens at a new gallery soon to open in Seoul. This special art gallery, **Alive Art Gallery Seoul Exhibition**, opened just last March and is exclusive to Korea.

Many of the great works from western artists are displayed using various media art techniques, whereby the famous portraits are seen moving and even talking. Such technology essentially brings the portraits to life, creating a very personal interactive atmosphere inside the gallery. For example, while Michelangelo is drawing "The Last Judgment," he stops for a moment and begins to explain his art. The Mona Lisa on the other hand, is animating, moving her hands and neck to greet visitors.

Tickets can be purchased at the door or in advance at the official website. English, Japanese, and Chinese services are provided for foreign visitors. Multi-language audio equipment is now available. This exhibit will be on indefinitely. The museum is opened from 10 am-7 pm. For tickets, call +82-2-1588-4909 (English, Japanese, Chinese) for information, call +82-2-541-0310 (English, Japanese, Chinese)

Animation Fest

Pixar's 20th Anniversary Showcase will run through September 7 at **Seoul Arts Center Hangaram Design Art Gallery** this year. The event marks the 20th Anniversary of the studio and commemorate the work of those who produced *Toy Story* (1995), *Monsters Inc.* (2001), *Ratatouille* (2007). Throughout the exhibition, drawings, sculptures, and



Kyongbuk Palace, Korea

KOREA/NTD

original paintings, characters, and story compositions developed by Pixar artists will be showcased to the public.

Zoetrope, which is specially produced for this exhibition, will display instructional animation theory to viewers and showcase, together with Artscape, a vast scale of video settings and short film screenings as well.

The exhibition will be a good opportunity to promote Pixar's presence to not only those that are interested in animation but to newer audiences as well. The Seoul Arts Center is opened daily except the last Monday of the month; 11 am- 8 pm. Call +82-2-561-4963 (Korean, English); www.sac.or.kr/eng/visit/Trans.jsp (Korean, English)

Flea-ing in Seoul

The Seoul Folk Flea Market kicked off April 26th near the popular foreigner tourist attraction of Cheonggyecheon Stream. The event marks the unique occasion for many to immerse in Korean tradition and provides an atmosphere full of artistic sentiment together with a wide selection of cultural dishes to sample. The new flea market features over 900 booths selling traditional folk souvenirs, regional specialties, clothing, food, and miscellaneous goods for tourists to experience.

The Seoul Folk Flea Market replaces Dongdaemun Stadium's old flea market and is now housed in a newly built 2-storey building along Cheonggyecheon Stream. Regional specialties, craftworks, pottery, and various traditional items are all located on the first floor, while the 2nd floor boasts interior merchandise, clothing, and simplified hanbok (traditional Korean clothing).

The Seoul Folk Flea Market is located a short 3-minute walk away from Sinseoldong Station and is remarkably close to the Cheonggyecheon Stream. Such close proximity makes this a must-see course for all foreigners to visit.

For more information, contact the **Korean Tourism Organization**; 800-868-7567; www.visitkorea.kr

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Korea see page 60 of the Listings Section

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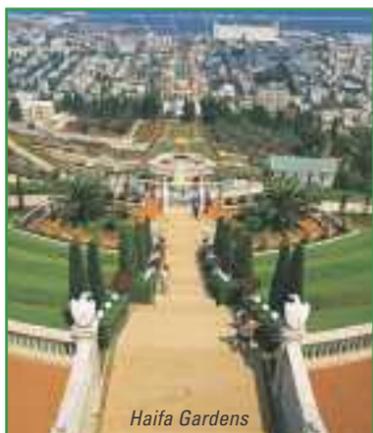
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Israel Recognized for its Past and its Future

Tourism to Israel in the first two months of 2008 rose a whopping 51% over the first two months of 2007, according to Arie Sommer, Israel Tourism Commissioner for North and South America. The first two months of 2008 were 34% up over the same months of 2006. "This is very encouraging," said Sommer, "especially as 2007 was the best year ever for American tourism to Israel." Some three million visitors are expected to visit in 2008; Israel marked its 60th anniversary in May.



Haifa Gardens

UNESCO Spotlight on Haifa

Last month, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee designated the Baha'i holy sites in Haifa and Western Galilee as an official World Heritage site, the 9th location in Israel to be recognized said Sommer.

The Baha'i holy sites, which include the Baha'i Gardens on both Mt. Carmel in Haifa and near Acre (Akko) on Israel's northern coast, were placed on the list that already includes the Old City of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv's "White City," Masada, the Old City of Acre (Akko), the Incense Route in the Negev and the Biblical Tels of Megiddo, Hazor and Beersheba.

Baha'i Gardens, Haifa Haifa's Baha'i Gardens, the most visited of the Baha'i holy sites, is considered a modern wonder of the world. The gardens comprise a network of nineteen terraces that course up the slope of Mount Carmel. The terraces are intricately planted with flowers, topiary, lawns and blossoming bushes and are connected by creamy stone staircases, pillared balustrades, gurgling water channels and ornamental fountains. "The Shrine of the Báb" is located halfway up the Carmel slope: its gold dome is Haifa's most instantly recognizable landmark.

"We are thrilled with the UNESCO recognition that highlights the importance of the Baha'i sites as one of the world's most majestic locations," says Haifa Mayor Yona Yahav. In a recent survey, 43% of last year's 600,000 visitors to Haifa said that

the Baha'i Gardens were the main reason for going to the city. As tourism to Haifa continues to grow, the city's officials are preparing zoning for 10 new hotels that would increase the number of available rooms to 3,000 in order to accommodate the influx of visitors to the Galilee region.

Dan's Accolades

For the third year in a row, Dan Hotels won the Best Service Provider in Israel award in an independent survey conducted by *The Marker*, Israel's top business newspaper. The Dan Hotel Chain scored the highest point total in all categories including service, food, value, and return visits, confirming the elite level of customer satisfaction offered by Israel's largest luxury chain of hotels. "We know what we've got, and of course we're delighted that so many of our guests enjoy and appreciate what the Dans stand for," said Dan Hotels President Ami Hirschstein. "The Dan Hotels Corporation works hard to consistently provide the very high service standard we have set ourselves and to surpass our guests' expectations."

In other news, remarkable renovations have taken place at the Dan Tel Aviv. Opened in 1953 as the first luxury hotel in Israel, it now counts 150 guestrooms and 18 suites that have been totally redecorated and refurbished.

Set on the Mediterranean, the Dan Tel Aviv is classified as a Super Deluxe 286-room hotel is well-located for business travelers and vacationers with inviting sandy beaches on one side and a short walk from the city's business center and Tel Aviv's nightlife on the other. The new rooms are enhanced with state-of-the-art technology such as LCD screens in the bedrooms and bathrooms, WiFi and iPod connections, and modern appliances. With the completion of these renovations, all rooms at Dan Tel Aviv have now been renovated to the highest standards of "Leading Hotels" worldwide.

Jacob Sudri, General Manager of the Dan Tel Aviv said, "We're very proud of our new deluxe guestrooms as they encompass all the elegance, comfort and modern technolo-

gies that our guests enjoy and expect...these investments will enhance the completion of our new and renovated Lobby that situated frontal to the sea. Call 800-223-7773; www.danhotels.com

Visitors to Israel's largest metropolitan area now have a new resource, *City Guide TEL AVIV*. An updated and expanded edition of the book originally published in 2006 by Israeli editor, Dalit Nemirovsky, the new version, with introductions by Lisa Goldman and journalist Gal Uchovsky, is 206 pages of seductive color devoted to the delights of one of the world's hippest cities. Published by Crossfields TLV, *City Guide TEL AVIV* is available at U.S. bookstores, from amazon.com, or online at www.cityguidetelaviv.com.

Hotspot for Wine Connoisseurs

Tiberias has been central to the wine industry in Israel since biblical times, indeed, 2000 years ago, wine production in the Galilee region was the mainstay of Israel's economy. Fast-forward to the 21st century: Israel has concentrated on utilizing the rich soil of the Galilee, the Golan, the Plain of Sharon and the Judean Hills, developing world-class wineries that have attracted praise from wine experts around the world.

To capture the Galilee's natural mystique and rich history, Tiberias' **Scots Hotel**, originally established in 1894 as a hospital, is now offering a collection of boutique wines grown locally including selections from Chateau Golan, Dalton, and Tabor and Golan Wineries. Special to the region, the wines

are stored in a one-of-a-kind underground wine cellar and preserved at precise temperature and humidity.

The hotel's wine cellar previously served as a hospital storeroom. The underground space is tunnel-shaped and its 19th century basalt stone dates from the hotel's construction in 1894 and is used as a dining room for private parties, wine workshops and tastings. "The Galilee region is home to some of the best wines in Israel," said Sommer, "The unique selection preserved in the Scots' underground wine cellar provides visitors with a true taste of the Galilee." Visit www.goisrael.com

Taking Off News

EL AL, Israel's national airline, is replacing its nonstop flights from Miami with new EL AL/American Airlines code share flights. Starting September 2, 2008, EL AL passengers departing Miami can travel on American Airlines to New York (JFK/Newark) or via a few European cities and connect to a nonstop EL AL flight to Israel. The same options are available on return flights from Israel to Miami.

The new code share agreement allows EL AL passengers traveling from the Southeast region of the U.S.A. when choosing their flight dates and times as there are numerous American and nonstop EL AL flights which easily connect. Other benefits include excellent fares, automatic luggage transfer to the connecting flight, and the ability to earn EL AL Matmid frequent flyer points on American Airlines code share flights (in addition to the EL AL flights). The existing

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thrice weekly nonstop flights between Miami and Tel Aviv continue through September 1, 2008. Call 800-223-6700; www.elal.com

Iberia's Merger Talks and Boost to Israel from U.S.

Another member of the oneworld alliance that includes American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, JAL, LAN, Malev, Qantas and Royal Jordanian is boosting its capacity to Israel.

Spanish carrier, Iberia Airlines, which recently announced merger plans with British Airways, in what would be the first major alliance between European carriers since the surge in oil prices have pushed fuel prices to record levels, has added 13% more seats on its routes connecting the U.S. with Israel via Madrid. The increased supply is especially important to the U.S. market, since last year 12.3% of Iberia's Israel-bound passengers began or finished their journeys with the Spanish airline in Boston, Chicago, Miami, New York, or Washington DC. Other points of origin for Iberia passengers to Tel Aviv were Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro.

The passenger count – more than 169,000 that flew to Israel with Iberia in 2007 – represents a 19.2% increase from 2006, with average cabin occupancy reaching 82%.

Iberia's A340s, used primarily on Iberia's intercontinental flights, will operate between Madrid and Tel Aviv on Mondays and Saturdays. Call 800-772-4642; www.iberia.com

The Coolest City of Israel

The New York Times travel section called it "The capital of Mediterranean cool." July's *Travel+Leisure* magazine put it this way: "An influx of wealth, progressive culture, and world-class cuisine is reshaping this resilient Mediterranean metropolis." The city is, Tel Aviv, which is about to turn its 100 years old in 2009. Year-long celebrations will kick-off April 4, 2009 with a massive concert in Rabin Square, complete with multi-media experiences and performances by international stars, the New Israeli Opera and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta.

An updated and expanded edition of the guidebook, *City Guide TEL AVIV*, by Israeli editor, Dalit Nemirovsky, is now available to Americans. On-line it describes Tel Aviv: "It goes with the flow, each morning, it decides anew what is interesting, what is annoying and where it is going. Something always happens here. And with a little luck, it will happen to you." Visit www.cityguidetelaviv.com

Founded in 1909 on sand dunes as a garden suburb of ancient Jaffa, Tel Aviv quickly burgeoned into a metropolis, styling itself as 'the first Hebrew city in two millennia.' By the 1930's, architects escaping the Nazis were creating the wealth of Bauhaus buildings which gave Tel Aviv its unique look and which caused its "White City" to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. By the turn of the 21st century the city had become home to dozens of world-class restaurants, a fashion scene that combines Milan, Tokyo and New York and a wealth of world-class cultural institutions.

Visit www.goisrael.com

FIT's Kenya/Egypt at 2008 Rate

Tour operator, Foreign Independent Tours (FIT TOURS) reports that it is bringing back a new, enhanced version of its air-inclusive Egypt and Kenya program that proved to be extraordinarily popular last year. "Traffic dropped off during the Kenya problems. However, Kenya's popularity has recovered as it has managed to stabilize its political conflicts and requests are flooding in," says an FIT spokesperson.

FIT TOURS has added an extra day to make the program less rushed, added a dayroom so participants can rest before the night flight Cairo to Nairobi, added a pre-night in Nairobi to guarantee early check in Nairobi, and has managed to keep the starting price of \$3,799 per person double (for Nov. 7 departure), when it is booked by Oct. 31. Rates range up to \$4,999 per person double for the Dec. 19, 2008 departure; pricing includes roundtrip airfare from New York to Nairobi; other gateways available upon request.

The seven-night program includes seven Game Drives and accommodations at the following properties: the Nairobi Hilton, Sarova Shaba, the Lion Hill Lodge, and the Mara Sarova Lodge.

Call 800-248-3487 ext. 3; fax 201-585-2298; E-mail info@fittours.com; www.fittours.com

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Israel see page 80-81 of the Listings Section

BEST BUYS

\$2400 ZAMBIA

Many travelers to Africa have heard of these vast open grasslands in the far west of Zambia, but very few have been there, but Robin Pope Safaris is offering your clients a chance to visit this immense wilderness.

The Liuwa Plains is an enormous wilderness area, brimming with birds and home to huge numbers of animals such as pelicans, zebras, tsessebe, buffalo, hyena, and cheetah.

The dates for the four-night safari are: December 2, 2008, and in 2009: May 16 and 30, and June 13. Rates start at \$2,400 per person double. Five-night safaris take place December 6 and 11, 2008; and in 2008, May 2, 7, 12, 21, and 26 and June 4, 9 and 18. Five-night safari rates start at \$3,000 per person double. Included in the rates are accommodations, meals, park fees, and activities. E-mail info@robinpopesafaris.net; www.robinpopesafaris.net

\$3060 ANCIENT NUBIA

Diane Panaschi, Marketing and Product Development at Foreign Independent Tours said, "I think this air-inclusive tour will 'speak' to a younger demographic." The new program combines a fully-escorted tour of Cairo and a cruise tour of Lake Nasser from Aswan to Abu Simbel. The price includes trans-Atlantic and domestic airfares, three nights' accommodations each in Cairo and aboard the cruise ship m/s Eugenie, 13 meals, all sightseeing, entrance fees, and services of an Egyptologist on all tours.

The eight-day air-inclusive (including air fuel surcharges) Nubian Tour, priced from \$1,799 per person double, travels to Ancient Nubia, located in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Nubia's history can be traced from 3100 BC through Nubian monuments and artifacts, as well as written records from Egypt and Rome. To the ancient Mediterranean world, the land south of Egypt was a mysterious territory rife with sealth and exotic products.

In the last century, Nubia has yielded its secrets, its vanished peoples, abandoned cities and lost kingdoms brought to light by excavations, analyses of inscriptions presented in an exhibit of objects recovered over 20 years ago by the Oriental Institute Nubian Expedition in the effort to rescue archaeology from the rising water behind the Aswan Dam.

The program includes roundtrip Trans-Atlantic Air from JFK to Cairo; for BWI, Washington Dulles add \$98; Detroit add \$110; San Francisco add \$276. Accommodations are at the five-star Sofitel Sphinx Hotel in Cairo, three nights aboard M/S Eugenie in a standard cabin—upgrades are available.

Call 800-853-6453; 800-248-3487; www.fittours.com

\$4195 ISRAEL & JORDAN

Agents earn 12% commission when they book Ya'lla's Christian pilgrimage group tour of Israel & Jordan, *In the Footsteps of the Bible*, departing March 2-14, 2009. Agents booking 10 or more passengers will get one free on this annual program. Priced at \$4,195 per person double with round-trip air, from any Delta Air Lines' U.S. gateway, rates also include accommodations, breakfast and dinner daily, transfers, touring, entrance fees and hotel taxes.

"This is a great opportunity for agents with clients who

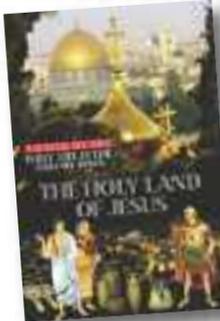
want a religious tour but do not want to pay for a privately escorted tour," says Ya'lla Tours president, Ronen Paldi. "That's why we offer a group pilgrimage tour once a year that anyone can buy into. The same tour, with private escort, would cost about \$7,000 per person...our program represents a savings of more than \$3,000 per person, \$6,000 for a couple!" The itinerary includes four nights each in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee and in Jerusalem, two nights in Petra, one night in Aqaba with visits to important biblical sites in Israel and Jordan as well as Masada, Petra and Wadi Rum. Call 800-644-1595; www.yallatours.com

\$2699 SOUTH AFRICA

South African Airways Vacations announced their new special to South Africa, a nine-day five-star Sabi Sabi In Style package, priced at \$2,699 (plus fuel surcharges and taxes) operating December 1-19, 2008.

This package includes international airfare from New York or Washington DC on South African Airways, four nights of accommodation at the five-star Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa in Cape Town, and two nights at the well-known, five-star Sabi Sabi Bush Lodge located in the Sabi Sands, adjacent to Kruger National Park, plus a half-day winelands tour in Cape Town, six breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, game drives, transfers and flights within South Africa. Call 800-387-2706; E-mail info@lionworldtravel.com; www.lionworldtravel.com

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Tanzania's Classic Safari Country Emerges from Neighboring Shadow

By Jeff Burdick



TANZANIA NTO

Quick geo quiz. Which East African country is home to 1.) Kilimanjaro? 2.) Serengeti National Park? 3.) Zanzibar?

If you answered Tanzania to any of these, pat yourself on the back. If you answered Kenya – Tanzania's neighbor to the north – well, you're not alone. Despite Tanzania being home to some of the most recognizably African travel icons, few travelers associate Tanzania with its premier unique attractions.

Yet, Tanzania has seen its tourism star rise precipitously, and visitors have discovered a refreshing throwback. Animals freely wander parks the size of whole U.S. states, and small-scale safari camps are left open to the largest wild populations in the world.

Notes Hon. Mme. Shamsa S. Mwangunga, Tanzania's Minister of Natural Resources & Tourism at a recent Sullivan Summit Conference of thousands of influential foreign and local leaders held in Arusha, Tanzania, that, "Estimates are that more than 750,000 tourists will visit Tanzania this year, and expectation is that the sector will earn a record \$1 billion (USD) for the economy this year. We also project that by 2010, Tanzania will receive one million tourists, up from 719,031 of last year, 2007. Further estimates are that by 2011, travel and tourism will account for \$7 trillion (USD) of combined tourism and related economic activities worldwide, and, as an effect, 260 million jobs will become available within and outside of Tanzania."

High Expectations Fulfilled

While Tanzania can't boast the decades-mature tourism industry of Kenya, luxury travelers need not lower their expectations. Among the newer up-scale operators upgrading Tanzania's reputation is **Renaissance Safaris**. Established in 2005, Renaissance Safaris specializes in personalized tours both in Tanzania's well-known northern parks – such as the Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Arusha – and within the lesser traveled jewels along the country's "Southern Circuit." Visit www.renaissancesafaris.com

In the Serengeti, this includes semi-permanent camps like Sayari that move with the famous migrating herds of hundreds of thousands of wildebeest. The camp's six large, luxurious tents are attended by a staff of 20. They fill each tent's bucket shower with heated water per the guests' schedule, and the turndown service includes hot water bottles that take any mountain chill out of the beds.

Let 'Em Roam Free

Like most camps in Tanzania, the Sayari camp is fenceless and open to the wilds. This is a significant difference from most Kenyan properties that are surrounded by electrified fences to keep animals out. To keep the guests safe, the camps typically employ Masai warriors who patrol the camps and escort guests to their tents after dark. Hearing your first lion's roar in the middle of the night can be unnerving as is the discovery of an array of strange footprints circling your tent in the morning. But it is all

part of that classic safari experience.

Whereas the Serengeti is notable for its wide-open plains and large herds of wildebeest, elephants and giraffe, the Selous adds classic rivers filled with hundreds of hippos, crocodiles and colorful cliff-clinging birds.

Accommodations

Jax Fax stayed at the **Rufiji River Camp**. The camp features 20 permanent tents, a canopied pool, central restaurant and library, and an enviable location overlooking the river, hippo pools and offering great sunset views.

From July to October, at high season, rack rates for full-board double accommodations at the Rufiji River Camp are \$310 per person per night; single supplement \$100. This includes park fees, conservation fees and daily excursions. E-mail info@hippotours.com

About 90 minutes west of the Selous by bush plane is Ruaha National Park, Tanzania's second-largest park—nearly the size of Connecticut. More forested than the Serengeti's wide-open plains, Ruaha features the largest elephant populations in Africa, widespread leopards and cheetah, and over 520 species of birds.

The **Ruaha River Lodge** is beautifully situated with all accommodations on the river and an excellent open-air restaurant. The 18 accommodations include 10 newly built "bandas" with large bathrooms, high-ceilinged bedrooms, a front sitting area, and a front porch. During high season, rack rates for full-board game packages are \$320 per person per night, including park fees and tax. E-mail fox@tanzaniasafaris.info. To reach Renaissance Safaris about luxury itineraries, rack rates and guide services, E-mail info@renaissancesafaris.com.

Getting There

Kenya Airways offers the fullest network of flights throughout East Africa, including into Kilimanjaro, Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam via London, Amsterdam and Paris. Call 866-748-2529 or visit www.kenya-airways.com

Qatar Airways announced that it has increased its passenger capacity on the Dar es Salaam-Doha route by more than 1,000 seats per month. Qatar has undergone a phenomenal expansion period, with an average of 35% growth year-on-year for the past 10 years. Visit www.qatar.com

Within Tanzania, **Coastal Aviation** offers a dependable schedule of flights into bush airstrips of dozens of safari camps. Visit www.coastal.cc.

For information visit the Tanzania Tourist Board at www.tanzaniatouristboard.com

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Tanzania see page 65 of the Listings Section

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CROATIA on the Cusp of Something Big for 2009

Croatia extends from the Alps to the famous Danube, and its history reaches as far back in time as the Roman Empire. The most visited areas of the country are Dubrovnik, the Adriatic resorts of Split, the island of Hvar, and the capital of Zagreb.

The island of Hvar ranked 11 on the *New York Times* list of the "53 Places to Go in 2008." Said Nena Komarica, general manager North America for the Croatian National Tourist Office in New York, "Some of the leading Tour Operators have already sold their programs for 2008 featuring Croatia, and are committed to planning 2009 brochures, because Croatia continues to garner publicity and popularity."

Known as the Pearl of the Adriatic, the seaport city of Dubrovnik has long been one of the premier destinations in the Mediterranean. During the Middle Ages it rivaled Venice in terms of commerce, culture and all-around beauty. Apart from many miles of coastline, the Dubrovnik Highlands are also a favorite place to visit, where mountains and pine forests serve as the setting for great hiking, fishing and winter sports.



CROATIA NTO

Dubrovnik: Known as the Pearl of the Adriatic, this ancient town has long been one of the premier destinations in the Mediterranean.

Zagreb, Croatia's capital, is a 900-year-old city of cobblestone streets that resembles Vienna, Prague and other great Central European cities. A must-see in Zagreb is Kaptol, the medieval complex of churches, palaces and museums that provide a glimpse of Croatian history.

New Products Roll Out Gently

This season, **Travel Impressions** has expanded its European portfolio with the addition of Croatia..

Said John Hanratty, chief marketing officer for Travel Impressions. "After seeing interest from our agents and their clients, we felt that now was the right time to enter the market in Croatia," he noted.

Travel Impressions is offering vacation packages to the seaport city of Dubrovnik and the Adriatic resort areas of Split and the island of Hvar, as well as Zagreb.

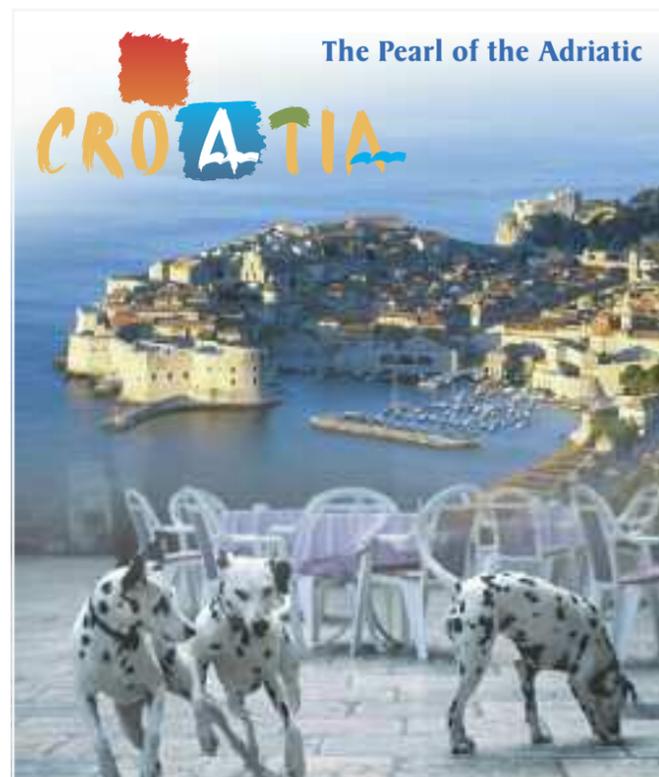
To introduce travel agents and their clients to its Croatia products, Travel Impressions is featuring specially priced five-night hotel packages, which include accommodations, airport transfers, and hotel tax.

Top Accommodations

Sample prices, based on double occupancy, are: on Hvar: **Riva Hotel Hvar** – from \$539 per person; **Adriana Marina Hotel & Spa** – priced from \$915 per person; in Split, **Le Meridien Lav** including private airport/hotel transfers and is priced from \$915 per person; and finally, the **Dubrovnik Palace Hotel** – includes private airport/hotel transfers and full breakfast is priced from \$995 per person double; for accommodations at the **Hilton Imperial Dubrovnik** plus private airport/hotel transfers, the price starts from \$1,199 per person double.

Agents will earn standard commission on sightseeing tours plus a 1% commission bonus when booking on the website. Tours include a full-day tour in Dubrovnik, which is on UNESCO's List of World Heritage Sites. Participants will take a motorcoach drive along the coastal highway for a panoramic view of the city walls, ancient rooftops and surroundings. During the walking tour of the city, the group will see Rector's Palace, the Dominical Monastery, fortresses and a treasure trove of architectural masterpieces preserved over centuries. The tour is \$59 per person.

Half-day tours of Split also include a visit to a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site -- Diocletian's Palace Base-



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Croatian National Tourist Office

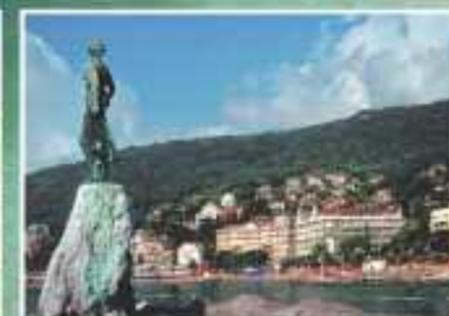
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ments and Peristyle, its ceremonial entrance court – as well as Jupiter's Temple and Cathedral. The tour includes breakfast and the services of an English-speaking guide and driver. The tour is \$62 per person.

A half-day tour of Zagreb includes the fortified Upper Town and its historic center, St. Mark's Church with its multi-colored roof, the Cathedral and the Croatian National Theater and University. Participants spend the afternoon at leisure, visiting Tkalciceva Street's galleries, open market, coffee houses, restaurants and parks. The tour costs \$247 per person. Visit www.travelimpressions.com

Dubrovnik by the Sea

Said Komarica, "Dubrovnik is the most popular cruise destination in Croatia, but we are developing other ports as well, and they are becoming part of many cruise lines' itineraries such as Zadar, Korcula, Pula, Split, Sibenik."

The M/S "Monet" for instance, cruises along the Adriatic stopping in all of these ports-of-call. "Zadar port is undergoing huge renovation to upgrade its current facilities and be able to receive more big cruisers," she added.

Akuas Dubrovnik, a water-shuttle and island-transfer service, is now offering shuttle-transfers between Gruz Port and Old City Harbor to provide passengers with a 30-minute panoramic view of the city. Cruise travelers visiting the destination have been caught in a series of pedestrian grid-locks

lasting up to an hour and a half going into the walled-city, so Akuas' shuttles provide an alternate way to see the city. The fleet is comprised of modern cruisers that include seven 40-passenger boats and one 60-passenger vessel that are currently providing continuous transfer service to Dubrovnik's cruise passengers.

The company also offers island-transfer service to visitors and locals who desire to visit the Elafiti islands located just off the coast. Visit www.akuas.hr

Getting There

Currently, there are still no nonstop, direct lines from the U.S. to Croatia but **Skyservice Airlines** continues to operate direct service between Toronto and Zagreb through October.

At the same time, **Croatia Airlines** signed code share agreement with **United Airlines**, which will help U.S. travelers find more connections to Croatia.

For more information, contact the **Croatian National Tourist Office** at 800-829-4416 or visit www.croatia.hr

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Croatia see page 68-69 of the Listings Section

IN THE NEWS

On View: Autumn Art Exhibits

Taormina-through October 1: In the stunning **Church of Carmine**, an exhibit of 63 rare etchings and lithographs dating from 1960 to 1980 by the Catalan artist Joan Mirò are on display. The art exhibit is presented by Taormina Arte in collaboration with the Maeght Gallery and is personally curated by Isabelle Maeght. The relationship between the Maeght Foundation and Joan Mirò was very unique. As it was noted, the gallery owner, Aime Maeght, was not only a close friend of Mirò's, but also his exclusive art vendor for Europe until 1947. The extraordinary and unique testimony of their stainless rapport are Mirò's etchings specifically created for the Maeght Foundation. Visit www.miroataormina.it



ITALY/NTA

Florence-through Nov. 2: This exhibition will be held at the **Galleria degli Uffizi** in Florence will aim to focus on the legacy left by Giotto's artistic influences. Giotto had been acknowledged, by his contemporaries, for his pivotal role in the evolution of painting and pictorial vision of the time. Giotto died in 1336 and art critics considered the period following his death as devoid of any vitality and negatively marked by the terrible plague of 1438. New and recent interpretations have changed this assumption, and have reconsidered the works of other artists from the early 1400s, as well as Florentine art around 1370. This exhibit aims to document the artistic developments of a period lesser known to the public. Visit www.polomuseale.firenze.it

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Travel-Trade Networking in Bavaria

By Tom Bross

No big European city outdoes Munich when it comes to putting on a rousing, cast-of-thousands party. Meaning, of course, annual 16-day beer-quaffing Oktoberfest (coming soon: Sept. 20-Oct. 5). Then there's the Bavarian capital's current 850th anniversary, commemorating initial Isar riverside settlement—established by royal Babenberg decree as a haven for monks (Mönchen) in 1158.

Keeping those celebrations in mind, Munich's co-hosting (with nearby Augsburg) of the 34th German Travel Mart was nicely timed. The dates: last April 27-28. Choosing two south-Bavarian locales made this major industry get-together doubly appealing.

Linked by the A-8 Autobahn motorway, Munich-Augsburg driving distance totals merely 35 miles. Workshops and supplier-buyer networking took place in north-side Munich's Olympiahalle, part of the sports layout developed for 1972's Summer Games. From there, the scene shifted west to Augsburg for sightseeing and an evening gala, held in the painted-ceilinged Goldener Saal (Golden Hall) of the municipal government's 17th-century Renaissance Rathaus. Both cities are repeat performers, having hosted previous GTM get-togethers— Munich: 1973 and 1993—Augsburg: 1979. The '08 edition tallied impressive attendance figures. Overall, 366 German exhibitors showcased their products and services to 672 travel-industry representatives (plus 100 journalists) from 42 countries. This year's contingent of buyers and reporters included 51 Americans.

Much to See & Do in Bavaria's Zesty Capital

Munich ranks consistently high as an all-seasons destination. Not surprisingly, considering its fine-arts and special-interest museums, Baroque Nymphenburg palace, three major symphony orchestras and acclaimed Bavarian State Opera productions. The Marienplatz's tall-towered, neo-Gothic Neues Rathaus (new Town Hall) draws extra-big crowds when the Glockenspiel does its mechanical-musical turnaround three times daily in summertime. Double-domed Frauenkirche Cathedral, prominent on inner-city panoramics, dates from 1525. By turning a few corners, citygoers find their way to beerdom's famous Hofbräuhaus

Four of Munich's three dozen casual, leafy beer gardens are nestled in sprawling Englischer Garten acreage. Other attractions cover a broad spectrum. For instance, near an Isar riverbank: 1985's strikingly modern Gasteig cultural complex (including a concert hall). Completed two decades later, at St.-Jacobs-Platz: a combined Jewish synagogue and community center. Now three years old, 66,000-seat Allianz Arena—wrapped inside thousands of diamond-shaped, illuminated-at-night air bubbles—grabs attention as Europe's most futuristic soccer (Fussball) stadium.

Innovative architects transformed a block of historical buildings into Fünf Höfe (Five Courtyards), an interconnected ensemble of shops, restaurants and cafés, people-packed since opening in 2003. Another newcomer, close to GTM '08 meeting venues, blends automotive technology with razzle-dazzle design. Namely BMW Welt (BMW World), contoured like a swooping double

sphere (right). Featured attraction: a collection of mint-condition, Munich-manufactured sedans and coupes (motorcycles, too) spanning nine decades, displayed in spotlit galleries. They're augmented by shops, two stylish restaurants, bistro, coffee bar and kids' play area.

So no wonder local tourism officials record impressive incoming numbers. Last year, they registered 2.1 million arrivals from foreign markets, amplified by 4.5 million overnight stays (a hefty 8.1% boost over 2006). U.S. visitors topped 2007's incoming international list with their 688,214 overnights (a 4.9% increase). Add an annual surge of 93 million day-trippers for solid proof of the city's popularity. That makes Munich Germany's second-most visited metropolitan destination after Berlin.

A Venerable City on the Romantic Road

Augsburg's origins as a Roman provincial capital date from 15 B.C. Now centered on the Romantic Road, tours beginning at its massive town hall lead to Domkirche St. Maria, featuring frescoed walls and five 12th-century Romanesque stained-glass windows. The Roman Museum's stone and bronze antiquities are on view in a former Dominican church. Then up Maximilianstrasse to the Fuggerei quarter, built for needy citizens in 1519, therefore the world's first social-welfare housing project. Nearby, Old Masters paintings hang in the mirrored, gilded Rococo Hall of the Schaezlerpalais. Open to the public, the birthplace (1898) of Threepenny Opera playwright Bertolt Brecht stands on a side street.

According to up-to-date statistics quantifying travel throughout the Federal Republic—West and East, cities and beyond—only the Netherlands outdoes the U.S. as the leading international source market. Forecasting 35 million overnight stays in 2008, the Frankfurt-based German National Tourist Board aims for 66 million (including six million U.S. sleepovers) by 2015.

Berliners anticipate next year's 20th anniversary of the infamous Wall's downfall. For comparable remembrance, tell your clients about "the Green Experience." Linking pertinent memorials, 14 walking-cycling-kayaking routes retrace the Cold War border's 858-mile length through reunited Germany's midsection.

Post-GTM sidetrip previewed next year's 90th anniversary of the influential Bauhaus designers' collaborative—creators of form-and-function architecture, furniture, appliances, graphics—pioneered in Weimar (1919), afterward Dessau (1925). Before that, such classical luminaries as Bach, Goethe, Schiller and Franz Liszt made Weimar Germany's most eminent cultural domain. Then came resurgent Leipzig in the heart of Saxony, followed by an individual JAX FAX stopover in Magdeburg.

Contact the **German National Tourist Office** in New York City at 800-637-1171; Chicago, 773-539-6303; Los Angeles, 310-545-1350. Visit: www.germany-extranet.com (for the travel trade). Note: 2009's GTM host city is Rostock, proud of its Baltic-coastal Hanseatic heritage.

For consolidator airfares and tour packages to Germany see page 70-71 of the Listings Section



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Italy Promises Deals and Autumn Sunshine

By Maria Lisella



Italy has become a year-round destination as has much of Europe, but because of its mild weather even in winter, getting around Italy is very comfortable almost always. Add to this, a series of new offers that highlight southern regions, many of which are somewhat unexplored by Americans, which also offer some of the best deals in high and low seasons. Further, airfares from Eurofly make getting to Italy a good deal, what you plan for your clients once they hit the road, is up to you. Since it is a mature destination, Italy has attracted suppliers that cater to all budgets, tastes and interests, so agents can tap into a vacation that is custom fit for their clients. Traveling "off season" never looked this good.

Chasing the Untold Story

Visit Italy Tours has launched a seven-day independent program visiting the Puglia Region, one of the most undiscovered regions of Italy. Guests stay three nights in Alberobello, rife with the conical-roofed trullis, mysterious dwellings, originating hundreds of years ago, with thick limestone walls. They will visit the town of Ostuni, known as the "white town" for its white-washed houses, Martina Franca, the village of festivals, with its fine crafted ceramics and Locorotondo, "the round village," named for the shape of the original historical settlement.

Two additional nights are spent in a farmhouse in Corigliano d'Otranto, where clients will experience an introductory class on the methods of cooking local cuisine, and partake in visits to the baroque town of Lecce and Gallipoli, located in an enchanting island along the pristine waters of the Ionian Sea. Additionally, participants will visit Castellana Grotte to explore its famous caves, and Cisternino to learn the art of making mozzarella cheese.

The program covers five nights' accommodation, breakfast



Portofino

ITALYINFO

daily, four dinners, a six-day car rental in category B (manual transmission). Land arrangements only are priced from \$954 per person double. International airfare and entrance fees to the caves are additional. Valid Nov. 1, 2008 through Mar. 31 2009. Call 800 255-3537; fax 310 649-6880; E-mail info@VisitItalyTours.com; www.VisitItalyTours.com

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With more than 40 years in custom designing vacations to Italy, Donna Franca has decided to combine land and sea in two 12-night itineraries on Crystal Cruise Lines with the option of purchasing a pre or post independent land package, along with innovative private shore excursions within Italy. Known for her first class and deluxe travel arrangements to Italy, Donna Franca has personally selected one of the more exclusive and sophisticated cruise lines where customer satisfaction is a top priority.

The first departure, aptly called, 'Discovery of Ancient Empires' is an arts and antiquities theme-based itinerary and departs from Athens on October 6th and disembarks in Rome Civitavecchia on October 18th. Ports of call include Athens, Kusadasi, Rhodes, Alexandra/Cairo, Sardinia, Naples and Rome. The second departure, 'Mediterranean Majesty' is a food and wine theme-based cruise and departs from Rome Civitavecchia on October 18th and ends in Barcelona on October 30th and includes Rome/Civitavecchia, Naples, Sicily, Gibraltar, Malaga, Valencia, Palma de Mallorca and Barcelona.

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*To be eligible for a prize you must successfully complete the certification program by November 30, 2008. See website for promotion details.

EUROPE

Rates start from \$ 4,545 per person double occupancy in a category -C deluxe stateroom and as an exclusive bonus for booking through Donna Franca Vacations, clients will receive a complimentary upgrades to a verandah stateroom, worth over \$1,500 per person and the choice of either a \$125 per person shipboard credit or \$125 per person spa credit. "Better yet, the cruises, pre or post programs and private excursions are commissionable to your agency at 13%...so, here's your chance to earn commissions starting from \$590 per person with a single phone call," says Donna Franca. Call 800-225-6290.

Homeric Tours, long known as a specialist to Greece, has expanded its roster of Mediterranean inventory to include Italy's Amalfi Coast and Sicily and a cruise/land program, all of which are air-inclusive from New York's JFK.

The Romantic Holidays on the Amalfi Coast package, an independent vacation visits Rome and the seaside villages of the Amalfi Coast. The package includes two nights in Naples, three nights each in Positano and Rome, breakfast daily, half-day tours of Pompeii and Rome and all transfers and domestic transportation. Prices start at \$2,359.

The Homeric Delight package is a cruise-inclusive package visiting Italy, Greece and Croatia. Starting with a two-night stay in Venice, travelers sail on a seven-day cruise aboard MSC Cruises with ports of call in Greece including Santorini,



ITALY/INTO

Mykonos, Athens, Corfu and Katakolon (Olympia) and the Croatian city of Dubrovnik. Also included are a half-day tour of Venice, all meals and entertainment on cruise and transfers. Prices start at \$2,879.

Sicily on your Own is a classic fly/drive program that includes three nights in Palermo, two in Taormina, breakfast daily and a six-day car rental at the starting price of \$1,959. Extra nights or additional cities can be added.

Call 800-223-5570; E-mail info@homerictours.com; www.homerictours.com

Staying With and Near the Classics

Bettoja Hotels in Rome and the museums Scuderie del Quirinale and Palazzo Esposizioni have teamed up to promote the arts. Together they have released an illustrated, informative brochure that lists all the upcoming exhibits through 2009 in both Rome venues.

Besides supporting the arts, the Bettoja Hotels are near the arts, the Mediterraneo, Massimo D'Azeglio, Atlantico, and Nord are one block from the new Roman Archeological Museum, within walking distance of Scuderie del Quirinale, Palazzo

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EUROPE

Esposizioni, the Colosseum, and St. Mary Major. As a matter of fact, this arts brochure includes a map of a walking tour to all nearby museums. The art of shopping can be exercised on closeby Via Nazionale or on the more expensive Via Condotti, near the Spanish Steps, a 15 minute walk. Buses and subways that go directly to St. Peter's stop one block away.

In Florence, Bettoja's **Relais Certosa** is an extraordinary, property bordering a Medieval Monastery, the Certosa of Galluzzo. This 14th century edifice crowns the hill near the hotel, as beautiful a backdrop as can be found in Tuscany. Yet the 69 rooms property is only 15 minutes by hotel van to the center of Florence itself.

Call **800-783-6904**; fax **212-860-4544**; E-mail: reservations@bettojahotels.com; www.bettojahotels.it

Agents who book their clients at the historical and world-renown Hassler Roma by September 30, 2008, for a two-night minimum stay between Nov. 3 and Dec. 22, 2008, will receive about 35% off regular room rates. Options to make your clients' stay even more special: Personal Shopping Consultant (half-day tour) from about \$400; Massage at the Hassler Amorvero SPA from \$155; The International Wine Academy of Roma, located just a step away from the Hassler in a charming 16th-century Roman villa, will offer a 15% discount on any wine course clients participate in or organize privately for a party during their stay at the Hassler. Call **+39 06 699 340**; www.wineacademyroma.com

This fall and winter, Eurofly is extending two great deals to customers traveling to Italy. Blackout dates are from December 16-24, 2008.

ITALY FOR TWO: valid through October 31, 2008, book clients to Rome, Bologna, Naples, Palermo, Bari, Pescara, and Lamezia Terme at the price of \$858 for two in Economy, and \$3,298 for two in Business class. Add \$640 fuel charges and taxes \$172. The Pescara, Lamezia, and Bari flights are valid through Sept 30.

HOT WINTER DEAL: From Nov. 2, 2008-March 29, 2009 clients can travel to Rome at the rate of \$599 round-trip to Rome. Just 1,000 Seats available at this rate, which includes \$320 fuel surcharge, but not taxes of \$75 per passenger. Offer valid on round-trip flights departing JFK to Rome on Friday and Sunday November 2, 2008 to March 29, 2009. Travel must be completed by April 3, 2009.

Established in 1989 in Turin, Italy, Eurofly operates non-stop flights from NY's JFK airport, to Rome, Palermo, Bologna, and Naples, and direct to Pescara, Lamezia Terme, and Bari. Eurofly's Business Class is outfitted with state-of-the-art Weber seats. Economy Class seats were designed by Fiorucci. From September 1, through October 31, 2008 fares start at \$649 per person for Economy and \$1,999 for Business class. Call **800-459-4980**; www.euroflyvacations.com

For more information, contact the **Italian Government Tourist Office**, in N.Y., 212-245-5618; E-mail: enitny@italiantourism.com; in Chicago, 312-644-0996; E-mail enitch@italiantourism.com; in L.A., 310-820-1898; E-mail enitla@italiantourism.com; or, visit www.italiantourism.com

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Italy see page 72-74 of the Listings Section

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Tuscany and Umbria Wine, Chocolate & History
8 Days From **\$1999***
RT Air from JFK-Detroit add \$100. Use of car for length of stay. Breakfast daily. 3 nights Superior Villa Il Patriarca, Querce al Pino, near Chuisi, Sienna, Tuscany. 3 nights Relais Ducale, Deluxe room, Gubbio, Perugia, Umbria. 1 dinner at La Taverna del Patriarca, Gubbio (beverages excluded). English guided tour of an old wine cellar of Montepulciano. Special Wine Tasting. 1 dinner at the Taverna del Lupo Restaurant (beverages excluded). Complimentary Gelato in Gubbio. Enjoy 2.5 hr Guided tour of ancient city of Gubbio. Wine tasting with selection of local wines and finger foods, in Gubbio. 4 hr tour/private driver, to Chocolate Factory of Perugia, 45 minutes away.



Italian Spa, Beauty and Wine Package
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IN THE NEWS

Picasso Creates Spain Wine Tour

Wine lovers will rejoice over an escorted motorcoach tour of the Spanish wine route offered by **Picasso Tours**. This seven day trip only departs from Barcelona on Oct. 14, 2008 and May 24 and Nov. 11, 2009. This is a jam-packed tour that allows wine aficionados to visit the Torres, Bodegas Juan Alcorta, Marqués De Riscal, Bodegas Ysios's new La Rioja20Alavesa, Comenge and Legario wineries, the Dinastia Vivanco Wine Museum and other sites such as the Pilar Cathedral, Guggenheim Museum, Yuso and Suso Monasteries, Burgos Cathedral and Peñafiel Castle.

The trip begins in Barcelona and traverses the country visiting Vilafranca Del Penedés, Zaragoza, Logroñ, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, San Millan de la Cogolla, Haro, Bilbao, Elciego, La Guardia, Burgos, Peñafiel, Segovia and Madrid.

This special tour with guaranteed departures includes seven nights at four star accommodations, a bilingual tour escort, guided tours in Barcelona, Bilbao, Burgos and Logroñ, entrance fees to the wine cellars with tastings and appetizers and to sites on the itinerary, six breakfasts, four lunches and two special dinners.

The cost for the two scheduled trips in 2008 is \$1,559 per person, double occupancy, or \$1,974 for a single traveler. The prices for 2009 are \$1,698 per person, double occupancy, or \$2,129 for a single traveler.

Call **800-995-7997**; www.picassotours.com

Fall Values with Aegean

Aegean Mediterranean Cruises & Tours, a leading tour operator to Greece & the Mediterranean, is offering competitive rates and a high commission structure that ranges from 11-18%. Below is a sample of the latest short-term offers, all of which include roundtrip airfare from New York's JFK International Airport as well as accommodations in four and five-star properties, sightseeing, transfers, breakfast daily, and services of an English-speaking escort or guide. The "Aegean Adventure" itinerary starts at \$1,399 per person double; three nights in Athens and a three day Greek Island & Turkey Cruise. Departs weekly thru Nov. 5, 2008 "Taste of Greece" starts from \$1,799 pp double, three nights in Athens and a four-day Greek Island & Turkey Cruise, weekly departures thru Nov 8.

Call **888-968-0335**; www.aegeanmedtours.com

One Flight, Five options to Travel with TAP

TAP Portugal has launched new products aimed at different targets. These were designed to add more quality and flexibility to services offered to customers along with a wider choice, and a focus on price.

With a top priority of living up to customer's expectations, TAP announced the launch of five new branded products. With quality service as the common denominator, each one of the five new products offers more value, different features and specific levels of service, both aboard and on the ground: TAP Executive and TAP Plus offer swiftness and total flexibility, TAP Classic gives convenience and flexibility, TAP Basic - value for money and TAP Discount - low price.

The new products were developed to meet customers' needs, and include varied services, ranging from the best prices to the best Business class service.

In recent years, TAP has significantly expanded. The company has nearly doubled its operations and enhanced its positioning as the leading Portuguese airline. More destinations were added to its networks in Europe, Brazil and also in Africa. TAP increased frequencies to a number of destinations and acquired PGA, thus extending the reach of its European network.

TAP has launched a new corporate image, joined Star Alliance, and extended its fleet. The company implemented a new customer service division and works closely with the handling provider ground force and the Lisbon Airport Authority resulting in increased punctuality at departure.

For business travelers or those looking for a higher quality service, new services and facilities at airports are to be launched soon. TAP can already announce a new lounge of superior quality at Lisbon airport due to open next July 1st. Other improvements are to follow.

All in all, the new branded products represent a profound change in the commercial philosophy of TAP, the airline that invites customers to travel in a simple way: "Come aboard the freedom of choice."

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BEST BUYS

\$1422 EUROPE Orient-Express Trains & Cruises has announced 2009 rates for groups traveling on board their trains in Europe. Rates are fixed in dollars and represent as much as 46% off 2009 retail rates. As an added incentive, the rates are exactly the same as in 2008 if booked by **September 30, 2008**. Typical overnight journeys are from Venice to Paris or London but itineraries to Rome, Vienna, Prague and Budapest also can be arranged. Rates start at \$1,422 per person double, or 46% off 2009 retail rates. The **Royal Scotsman** starts at \$2,558, 30% off the normal rates. Call **631-847-3716**; E-mail **apines@oeh.com**

\$1750 SWITZERLAND Ryder Walker Alpine Adventures offers an all-inclusive five-day/six night guided hiking adventure in the Appenzellerland, Sept. 20-25, for \$1,750 land only. The Santis range tow-

ers over the charming village of Appenzell, where the trek begins and ends. Days are spent on hikes averaging six miles a day, overnights are in charming inns, berghouses and a high mountain "hut," with outstanding cuisine, big down comforters and hot water showers. Price includes daily breakfast and dinner, transportation from Zurich.

Call **888-586-8365**; E-mail **adventure@ryderwalker.com**; **www.ryderwalker.com**

\$2249 LONDON, PARIS Go Ahead Tours offers a nine-day air/hotel inclusive package to London and Paris whose Sept. 27 departure price of \$2,249 drops to \$2,179 on Oct. 4 and \$1,929 on Nov. 1 and 8. Prices includes transfers; Go Ahead Tour Director, seven nights' accommodation with breakfast; hotel services, charges and tips and high-speed Eurostar train. Call **800-590-1170**; **www.goaheadtours.com**

\$735 CZECH REPUBLIC With **Adventura Bike Holidays'** "Spa Triangle and Prague" five night/six day tour, you cycle through Czech Republic's fairy-tale landscapes. One guided tour departs on Oct 12-17. Self-led tours are available through October, as well as supported tours. Highlights include Prague, Becov, Carlsbad. Self-led tours begin at 470 Euros in a group of six, and include lodging, breakfast, map and route instructions, baggage transport, GPS, telephone and personal help, train tickets and schedules, and the beer spa. Supported tours with support vehicle are 470 euros or about \$735 (minimum six), 520 euros or \$810 for four people and 660 euros for two. Fully guided tours cost 1,040 euros or \$1,620 with transfers. E-mail **info@bikeholidays.eu**

\$50 ENGLAND **Travelodge** - a budget hotel chain in Britain - claims to have 1,000,000 rooms priced at £26 or less (around \$50). With 320 hotels across Britain, Travelodge offers good quality, good value, modern accommodation. Ideal for families, the rooms include TV, tea and coffee-making facilities, comfortable beds and private bathrooms. These 'Saver' rooms can be booked online at **www.travelodge.co.uk**.

Grim's Dyke Hotel, a country house property located just 10 miles from central London, is offering special rates to guests on Friday nights. Three-course dinner, bed and breakfast costs from \$100 per person on Friday nights when booked online. **www.grimsdyke.com**

\$1370 FINLAND ScanAm World Tours' eight-day/seven-night King's Road Tour Packages to Helsinki, Turku and Stockholm are priced at \$1,370, covering three nights in Helsinki and one night in Stockholm at first-class Scandic hotels with breakfast, two nights at the Naantali Spa Hotel in Turku and overnight crossing from Turku to Stockholm in a seaside cabin with breakfast. Helsinki sightseeing, train excursion to Porvoo and private transfer from Turku Railway Station to Naantali. For airfare quotes contact Scanam World Tours. Call **800-545-2204**, **www.scandinaviantravel.com**

Selling Short and Sweet Cruises

By Jonathan Siskin, Cruise Editor

While skyrocketing gas prices combined with a shaky economy have caused many Americans to forego their travel plans this year in favor of "staycations", there are still some good deals available for "budget challenged" clients seeking a reasonably priced vacation. Among the most affordable travel buys that provide maximum value for the dollar are short cruises of three, four and five nights.

Besides affordability—prices for a three-night cruise start as low as \$200 per person, double occupancy—another key selling point is convenience as clients can drive to the departure port without having to contend with the hassles of airports and overcrowded flights. Cruising nowadays is all about choice, flexibility and value, and there are more than 30 domestic ports from Seattle to Los Angeles to Galveston, New Orleans, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Baltimore, New York and Boston—offering a variety of itineraries throughout the year.

TESTING THE WATERS

Setting the pace are the two industry biggies—Carnival and Royal Caribbean— which are deploying more ships than ever before on cruises of five days or less out of U.S. ports. These cruises are especially popular with couples looking for a romantic getaway as well as families and groups of friends looking for a relaxing, fun-filled weekend. Short cruises also offer first time cruisers the opportunity to "test the waters" without making a major time commitment and who want to experience what cruising is all about before investing in longer voyages.

Choices abound for short cruises for the remainder of the year, and among the reasonably-priced itineraries available are three-day Bahamas cruises and four and five-day western Caribbean sailings out of Miami and Fort Lauderdale, four and five-day Caribbean itineraries departing from New Orleans and Galveston and three and four-day Baja cruises out of Los Angeles. There are also three and four-night sailings out of Los Angeles calling at Ensenada, San Diego and Catalina Island.

While **Carnival** and **Royal Caribbean** dominate the short cruise market, **Norwegian Cruise line (NCL)** is also becoming a player by offering three and four night cruises to the Bahamas out of



Miami aboard the **Norwegian Sky**. The four night itinerary includes calls at Grand Bahamas Island, Nassau and Great Stirrup Cay, NCL's private island in the Bahamas while the three night cruise stops in Nassau and Great Stirrup Cay. Prices start at \$229 per person for an inside cabin and \$329 for a balcony cabin, and these short cruises will be offered through at least mid-April, 2009

Another itinerary, steadily growing in popularity, visits Atlantic Canada from April through October. Approximately 600,000 passengers will cruise to four main Canadian ports—Saint John, New Brunswick; St. John's, Newfoundland; Halifax, Nova Scotia and Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island— during 2008, a 45% increase over last year. A four day roundtrip sailing aboard the **Carnival Victory** out of New York City starts at \$469 per person, while five day cruises begin at \$519. Meanwhile **Royal Caribbean** offers five night Atlantic Canada itineraries from Boston, Baltimore, Bayonne (Cape Liberty) New Jersey and Norfolk.

LOOKING AHEAD

Royal Caribbean International (RCI) announced that the cruise line will offer 18 itineraries ranging from two to five nights during 2009-2010 on more than 300 sailings. Clients can choose departures from Tampa, Port Canaveral, Port Everglades (Fort Lauderdale) and Miami aboard one of five RCI ships: **Navigator of the Seas**, **Enchantment of the Seas**, **Grandeur of the Seas**, **Majesty of the Seas** and **Monarch of the Seas**. "Short cruises offer a quick respite or a break from the usual as well as a great way for first timers to sample cruising for a few days," says Alice Norsworthy, senior VP/marketing at RCI. "These cruises leave year 'round from Port Canaveral and Miami, and seasonally from Tampa and Port Everglades. On our Bahamas cruises, guests can enjoy a full day at Coco Cay, Royal Caribbean's private island."

Beginning in November of 2009, **Navigator of the Seas** begins its third consecutive winter season cruising on western Caribbean itineraries out of Miami. **Navigator** has the distinction of being the first RCI ship equipped with a rock climbing wall, ice rink, nine hole mini-golf course and **Royal Promenade**—a boulevard lined with shops, restaurants, bars and loungers that extends nearly the length of the ship.

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Peru's Ancient Powers Re-emerge

ately, Peru has been sharing headlines with other Latin countries as it emerges as an energy producing nation that is now signing oil exploration contracts with strategic investors. In light of its robust GDP growth rate of 9% in 2007 Peru will see drilling, oil development and pipeline construction in the next two years.

Closer to the heart of what travelers think of as quintessentially Peru, the country has also welcomed the opening of a new and important museum. The National Museum Chavin, in the Andean region of Ancash.

Beyond Machu Picchu and the Incas

While Peru inevitably evokes images of Machu Picchu and the Inca empire, the country is also riddled with archaeological sites that are legacies of even more ancient times, when great civilizations made great strides in art, customs and rituals, leaving behind vestiges of their philosophy, traditions, wisdom and skills.



This aerial view of Machu Picchu was earned from a rigorous climbing by photographer Diane Zander.

Left: A gathering around the ancestors who are honored as the wisdom keepers in this indigenous culture of the Andes.

Below: Bridge of "los Suspiros" (Sighs) in front of Lima church.



Amazon tour priced from \$ 1,054 per person double, adds a night to the previous program and a few more meals. Call 866-978-2997; www.industravels.com

COLTUR Peru is a 50 year-old family-owned tour operator now in its third generation of management. Headquartered in Lima with branches in Cuzco and other main tourist destinations, the Coltur team is comprised of more than 70 multi-lingual tourism professionals, with a combined 250+ years of travel industry experience. The company's product line is

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The Inca empire was a recent arrival during the process of cultural development in the Andes during the pre-Hispanic era, and the history of the Incas barely accounts for a century within the 20,000 years of human occupation of Peruvian territory. While civilizations like the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Indian, and Chinese (3000 and 2000 B.C.) flourished, the city of Caral, located north of the city of Lima, was built; this was the first American expression of a pre-ceramic urban settlement with monumental architecture. Later, in the northern highlands, the Chavin were responsible for trailblazing in the fields of advances in architecture, engineering, and agriculture.

In an online report, Peru's President, Alan García, said that with the inauguration of the new museum Peru's deepest past of the homeland that is not usually taught in history classes – namely the *quechua* or Inca – will be preserved for future generations to know.

The Chavin civilization (1500-400 BC) achieved considerable prowess in architecture, engineering and agriculture in the northern highlands. Along the north coast, the Moche civilization (200 BC-700 AD) is famous for its realistic pottery (portraits carved into pots and gourds) and its pyramid-shaped temples. The same area was later controlled by the Chimú kingdom (900-1450 AD), who built Chan Chan, an immense mud-brick citadel featuring 12-meter-high walls and superb architectural work.

The Chavin culture is considered to be one of the mother cultures of Peru and for the first time, a museum brings together the evidence of how the high altitude environment made its impact felt through the culture's artistic expressions and religious ceremonies.

The museum has an exhibition area of more than 3,600 square feet, distributed among 14 rooms, including pieces of pottery and artifacts from that era, and the impressive Tello obelisk representing a feline deity carved in stone, as well as that of Raimondi, another divinity.

New Products to Watch and Book

Marnella's new "Following in the Footsteps of Charles Darwin & Hiram Bingham" takes clients to all the must see destinations of Peru and Ecuador. Both UNESCO World Heritage sites, Machu Picchu (Peru) & the Galapagos Island's (Ecuador) are to be seen first hand.

The program includes: three nights each in Cuzco, Hotel Casa Andina Cathedral, in Quito, Dann Carlton Hotel, aboard the M/V Legend, Superior-exterior cabin and one night in Aguas Calientes, Machu Picchu Inn. Guided tours are included in Cuzco, Sacsayhuaman Fortress, Machu Picchu, Quito, Equatorial Monument, the islands of Santa Cruz, Floreana, Espanola, San Cristobal, North Seymour, and the Darwin Station. Priced at \$2,939 per person double; add \$1,620 for single supplement; rates are valid through Dec., 2008.

Call 866-993-0033; fax 919-782-1665; E-mail info@marnellatours.com; www.marnellatours.com

Indus Travels has created a series of programs to Peru as well. The 11-day Grand Peru, priced from \$ 1,729 per person double includes taking the Vistadome train to Machu Picchu, almost all meals, a boat excursion on Lake Titicaca, the shorter seven-day Best of Peru Tour priced from \$795 per person double, covers six nights' accommodation, daily buffet breakfast, the backpacker train to Machu Picchu, two lunches and transportation. The eight-day Machu Pichu &

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geared towards the FIT, group, incentive and fishing special interest markets.

Special Interests

"Fly Fishing in the Colca Canyon," is among its best selling programs that is set among pristine streams and lagoons in the high Andean plateaus, inhabited only by herds of llamas and alpacas. Clients will fish in this surreal environment and be catered to with a gourmet picnic and a chilled Chardonnay waiting them at sunset.

The Colca Canyon, located four hours from Arequipa and twice as deep as the Grand Canyon, houses many colorful towns and villages founded during Spanish colonial times, inhabited by descendants of the Collagua and Cabana tribes. But perhaps the most renowned attraction is the Condor's Cross, a check-point from where tourists can see condors as they hunt. Pricing depends on season and size of group.

Contact Enrique Velasco, Sales Director E-mail enrique.velasco@colturperu.com or Diego Velasco, Sales Manager for Europe diego.velasco@colturperu.com; www.colturperu.com For more information, contact Promperu, www.promperu.gob.pe

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Peru see page 85-86 of the Listings Section

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IN THE NEWS

Riviera Nayarit: the Next Hot Spot

On its first anniversary as Mexico's newest official travel and tourism destination, **Riviera Nayarit** is celebrating a record of impressive achievement in the development of new facilities, infrastructure, travel packages and tours, and world class hotels and resorts.

The Riviera Nayarit stretches along 100 miles of Mexico's pristine Pacific coast framed by spectacular mountains to the north of renowned Puerto Vallarta, which is the gateway to the new zone, which includes Bahia de Banderas, Nuevo Vallarta, Punta Mita, Litibu and Flamingos.

"In just a year, Riviera Nayarit has begun to establish itself internationally as one of Mexico's newest and most in-demand destinations. We have become a popular year-round tourism destination demonstrated by the high average occupancies our hotels and resorts enjoy," said Marc Murphy, director of the **Riviera Nayarit Convention & Visitors Bureau**. "This is the result of major investment by government but also because of a remarkable joint effort by the public and the private sectors, including world-class international brands, to commit to this exceptionally beautiful and unspoiled region on the Pacific Coast. We are not going to rest on our laurels though, and we look forward to improving our products and creating new creative programs to attract travelers to Riviera Nayarit."

More than \$350 million worth of investment has been committed to 35 projects spread across the Riviera Nayarit. Since 2005, the Mexican government has also invested \$1.5 billion in tourism facilities and infrastructure in the destination, including a major new highway system under construction. The majority of hotel development in Nayarit is by Spanish brands, but among the American brands currently in the market or planned for the future are: **St. Regis, Four Seasons, Hyatt and Capella**. New properties and facilities that have opened since the brand was announced last year include 400-slip luxury marina in La Cruz de Huanacastle, the **Hotel des Artistes and Café des Artistes del Mar** in Punta de Mita, **Villa La Estancia** in Flamingos and the **Hotel Riu Pacifico** in Nuevo Vallarta. Visit: www.rivieranayarit.com

Low-cost Spirit of Colombia

Ultra-low-cost carrier **Spirit Airlines** has added daily non-stop service to Bogota, Colombia from its Fort Lauderdale hub as well as connections from its network of 16 other destinations in the U.S. to Bogota. With a population of seven million inhabitants, Bogota has become one of the most important capitals and business centers in the region. Its year-round spring-like climate and location at an altitude of 9,000 feet above sea level, provides a pleasant location for walking, and an excellent backdrop for restaurants, shopping, nightlife, coffee production and commercial centers. Bogota also has become a primary destination for congresses, fairs and conventions for the entire Latin America and Caribbean region. Visit www.spiritair.com

BEST BUYS

\$2100 MEXICO The Tides Zihuatanejo welcomes its first Yoga Retreat guests this fall with a custom-created wellness weekend. Fostering spiritual re-awakening and social companionship among its participants, celebrity instructor Tom Morley will lead a select group through inspired asanas and Sun salutations in one of the world's most seductive resorts. The first, in a series of masterfully-created five day yoga retreats at The Tides Zihuatanejo, takes place October 3 - 7, 2008.

The program includes: four nights' accommodations, two beachside yoga classes, gourmet meal plan (yoga breakfast bar and group choice of lunch or dinner), one daily 60-minute restorative massage of choice at The Tides Spa, closing night "Sense of the Night: Yoga Meets Dance" beach celebration, with DJ-spins including trance/dance, live percussionists and food and libations and transfers to and from Zihuatanejo airport. Rates range from Superior Room, \$2,100 double occupancy to the Beach Suite for \$4,400 for two in a room.

Call 866-905-9560; www.thetidesresorts.com

\$12.5K CHILE Adventure Life Voyages has announced a phenomenal "Ultimate Fly Fishing" river cruise in the Patagonia region of Chile. This seven-day program will captivate the hearts of all courageous explorers, seeking out places where humankind has barely been, fishing in streams that haven't been altered or polluted by human influence, and discovering landscapes that have never been touched by any but Mother Nature. Anglers will cast lines over some of the most spectacular and scenic rivers in all of Chile, fishing for coastal and resident trophy brown trout, rainbow trout, silver salmon, and king salmon.

Other opportunities include: relaxing tired muscles in breathtaking natural hot springs, fishing for native peladillas in isolated lagoons along the west coast of Magdalena Island, viewing exotic bird as visitors enjoy the sunsets from the deck, and taking helicopter rides over the Patagonia wilderness. Trips range from \$12,500 to \$20,250. Departures begin October 18, 2008 and run through March 14, 2009.

Call 800-344-6118; www.alvoyages.com

\$1219 MEXICO Wyndham Cozumel Resort & Spa is providing special package rates for the Octoberfest to take place in Cozumel, Mexico on October 4 - 11, 2008.

Guests can enjoy a seven-night package with five days of diving starting at just \$980 per person, based on double occupancy with stay in Caribbean Room. Divers can also choose to stay at the adults-only Sabor area at the Wyndham Cozumel Resort and receive a seven-night package with five days of diving starting at \$1,219 per person, based on double occupancy. Each package includes seven-night accommodations, entry to all Octoberfest events and activities, meals and beverages, five days of two-tank morning or afternoon dives provided by Sand Dollar Sports, a Candle Auriculotherapy treatment at the Islander Spa, photography seminars, taxes and tips.

Call 888-293-0293; www.wyndhamcozumel.com

\$960 MEXICO Casa Natalia Hotel "Gourmet Package" available now through October 31, 2008 offers guests a three night stay in this quintessential intimate retreat in San Jose del Cabo. Package includes deluxe accommodations with a private terrace, special Casa Natalia breakfast, shuttle to beach club, one tasting dinner for two at Mi Cocina Restaurant which includes wine pairing, and two in-room massages. Package is priced at \$960 with taxes and service fees included. Call 888-277-3814; www.casanatalia.com

\$1745 BELIZE Deep down in every sun-seeker lies a Castaway that dreams of a secluded vacation on their own private island. **Moho Cay Lodge** is a jewel in the spectacular Port Honduras Marine Reserve, that's powered by the sun, because staying green and preserving nature is what **Belize Lodge and Excursions' (BLE)** is all about. And getting there couldn't feel more adventurous. A 30 minute boat ride into the reserve will take you to a tiny island of warm white sand surrounded by the azure waters of the Caribbean. BLE is offering the Moho Cay five-night Castaway special package for \$1,745 includes: three nights at **Moho Cay**, one night at **Indian Creek Lodge** and one night at **Jungle Camp Lodge**. Call 888-292-2462; www.belizelodge.com

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Antigua's Festive Side to Attract New Business

By Merrie L. Murray



Even though beaches, a whopping 365 of them, play a major role in attracting visitors to their islands, government officials in Antigua and Barbuda are looking to festivals and special events to perk up tourism in the slower months – mid-April through the end of November.

Given the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, built for the 2007 ICC Cricket World Cup matches with a capacity of up to 20,000 seats, it is a savvy concept.

In mid-June, the twin islands of Antigua & Barbuda staged its first international music festival "Romantic Rhythms" at the new stadium headlined by Grammy-award winners Lionel Richie and Kenny Rogers and others. Coinciding with the event, was Delta Air Lines' inaugural nonstop service from New York's JFK to Antigua.

Although Antigua & Barbuda are no strangers to special events with Sailing Week, usually held the last week in April, is now in its 41st year, Carnival, which takes place in July through early August, is still going strong after 50 years and not an annual event, but the World Cup Cricket took place in Antigua in 2007; similar matches like the Stanford 20-20 Cricket Tournaments are held on the island as well as other domestic games. The Hon. Harold Lovell, Minister of Tourism, Civil Aviation, Culture and The Environment said, "Romantic Rhythms" is "more than just a good time... We want to build expertise locally and do it at the highest level." Training programs for event planners and event volunteers are now being offered throughout the islands through the government tourist office.

Antigua and Barbuda's Carnival office is now part of the National Festival Office and government officials are planning to invest in creative tourism to fill the calendar with events all year round with not only sports and musical events, but special interest events such as tennis matches, gospel and literary events. (See page 44 for information on Antigua's Third International Literary Festival, Nov. 7-9).

Romantic Rhythms Rock

Music at the festival included a mix of rock, soul, soca, calypso and reggae and some R&B and hip hop as well, but it all focused on romance. Wide screens and mammoth

speakers insured everyone could enjoy the show.

After a reception at **Sandals Grand Resort & Spa**, the music festival took off with sounds from Lionel Richie, Brian McKnight and Antigua's own El A Kru featuring Soca artist Tizzy.

Reggae star Maxi Priest also performed. Saturday evening saw Keyshia Cole, Musiq Soul Child and Burning Flames along with Kenny Rogers. Sunday's appearances included Damian Marley, son of Bob Marley, and Grammy-winning recording artist Shaggy. Local bands loved sharing the stage with the stars.

A little about the venue. Named for Antigua's own cricketer hero extraordinaire, Sir Vivian Richards, the \$60 million world class stadium sits just south of the airport on Antigua's north central coast near an old sugar factory. Funded largely by the Chinese for the world cup event, the stadium has huge potential and begs to be utilized.

During the day, festival goers can sample Antigua's attractions such as diving, sailing or laying on those perfect beaches. Visitors can zip through the rainforest with **Antigua Rainforest Canopy Tours** (www.antiguarainforest.com), visit **Nelson's Dockyard**, an 18th century British naval yard, and teetered at the edge of Devil's Bridge, a natural bridge carved over time by the ocean.

Jax Fax stayed at the 464-room all-inclusive **Jolly Beach Resort & Spa** with its new Palms Wellness Centre, three Beachfront Cottages and Gold Ribbon Dream Wedding package (866 905-6559; www.jollybeachresort.com) and visited two of Antigua's newest properties, the 162-room **The Verandah Resort & Spa**, a member of **Elite Island Resorts** (800-858-4618; www.verandahresortandspa.com) and **Hermitage Bay**, a zen-like boutique property. Call 268-562-5500; or visit www.hermitagebay.com.

Guests at the pre-festival reception at **Sandals Grande Antigua's new All-Suite Mediterranean Village** partied around the mammoth zero-entry pool surrounded with palms and private cabanas, the waters of the Caribbean just steps away. Call 800 726-3257; or visit www.sandals.com

The first international music festival has come and gone, watch for special promotions like "Kiss and Make Up" in the pipeline that also includes festival tickets for 2009's concert.



Getting There

With **Delta Air Lines'** new non-stop service from JFK-NY to Antigua and Barbuda, a long weekend is now doable with twice weekly flights (Thursdays and Sundays). Other airlines flying to Antigua and Barbuda include **American, US Airways and Continental**. **American Airlines** has just inaugurated a new nonstop flight from Miami (see below).

Taxi from V.C. Bird International Airport to Jolly Beach Resort & Spa takes 30 minutes and costs approximately \$35. Visitors pay a \$20 departure tax when leaving Antigua.

For more information, contact the **Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Office**, 888-268-4227; www.antigua-barbuda.org

For consolidator fares and tour packages to Antigua see page 52-53 of the Listings Section

Historic Nelson's Dockyard in Antigua

IN THE NEWS

Elite Offers Sept. 15 Air/Land Deal

To celebrate **American Airlines'** new nonstop service between Miami and Antigua **Elite Island Resorts** has a "Fantastic Fall" promotion plus resort savings of up to 40% when agents book clients' vacations by **September 15, 2008**, for

seven night stays or longer in Sept. and Oct.; clients qualify for a \$299 roundtrip airfare to Antigua from all major East Coast gateways. Airfare supplements of \$100 apply from the Midwest; \$200 from the West Coast. Nightly double occupancy, all-inclusive rates start at \$349 per room at The Verandah Resort & Spa; at \$349 at St. James's Club & Villas; and at \$620 at Galley Bay Resort & Spa.

Call 800-345-0356; www.eliteislandresorts.com



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BEST BUYS

\$80 USVI A trip to the Caribbean is one way to ignore rising gas prices by leaving cars at home and flying into St. Thomas airport (STT) so clients can make their way by taxi and ferry to **Maho Bay Camps** or **Concordia Eco-tents** on St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands. Both eco-resorts offer low rates for the summer and fall starting at \$80 for two people and kids under 16 are free.

The low season for Maho and Concordia (May 1-Dec. 15) continues for the next five months. David Swanson includes Harmony Studios in his article *Our Top 25 All-Stars Affordable Hotels* for the May 2008 *Caribbean Travel & Life*: "Built by the same team behind the St. John eco-lodge Maho Bay Camps, Harmony Studios is located just above it, providing more polished environmentally sensitive lodging. The 12 studios were assembled from recycled materials...each has tile floors, wicker furnishings, a kitchenette and a deck with incredible views. There are neither phones nor TVs for a total getaway.

Visit www.maho.org/Frame.cfm?page=Airfare

\$188 PUERTO RICO The Sheraton Old San Juan, which is situated in the heart of the seven-square-block historic district overlooking San Juan Bay, is selling a two-night Explore Old San Juan Package - via electric "Fun Car." Priced from \$188 per room per night based on two sharing, the deal is valid through Nov. 30. A minimum of two nights is required for the special rate, kids under 16 stay free with parents in the same room. Included are bay-view accommodations at the Sheraton Old San Juan; daily breakfast buffet for two; two-hour use of electric "Fun Car" to explore the Old City; Exploration backpack w/two water bottles; Passport booklet w/discounts to area merchants and retailers; complimentary use of the fitness center; \$20 Casino Match Bet, the only casino in Old San Juan.

Call 866-653-7577; www.sheratonoldsanjuan.com

\$899 TORTOLA, BVI Tortola's volcanic origins have created an unusual underwater wonderland of huge boulders, sponge covered canyons and soft-coral gardens in this pristine corner of the Caribbean. Here, seahorses, Flamingo Tongue Snails and slender filefish seek refuge amid colorful soft coral branches as barracuda, rays and sea turtles swim by. Partnering with Dive Tortola to add value for its guests, **Long Bay Beach Resort and Villas** is offering a five-night, all-inclusive Dive Tortola package priced from \$899 per person, based on double occupancy through December 20, 2008, and reflects a \$500+ savings if it was not booked as a package. The package includes five-nights accommodations in a Hillside Oceanview room, dining, top-shelf liquor, tax and service charges at the resort, and a two-tank dive—including equipment and instruction—with Dive Tortola.

Call 800-345-0356; www.eliteislands.com

\$569 PUERTO RICO Puerto Rico's Rincón is famed for boasting some of the world's great beaches for surfing, scuba diving and deep sea fishing, as well as seasonal whale watching and nesting of leatherback sea turtles. The town's secluded location and spectacular sunsets have positioned it as a top destination for romantic getaways and weddings. At **Rincon Beach Resort**, the Friends in Paradise Surfing package, valid through December 21, 2008 features three-nights' accommodations in a one-bedroom villa with the option to stay for a fourth night at no additional cost. The package also offers two full days of surfing lessons with a pro from the Rincón Surf School. Friends in Paradise includes a post-lesson in-room massage, daily full American breakfast, a welcome cocktail and tote bag. The rate for the package is \$569 per night, based on double occupancy; all taxes, gratuities and service charges are included. Two additional adults may stay in the villa for \$125 per night, per person. The villas at the Rincón Beach Resort feature fully equipped kitchens.

Call 866-589-0009; www.rinconbeach.com

IN THE NEWS

Fall Festivals -- from Food to Books

NEVIS: The 2008 Nevis International Culinary Heritage Exposition (NICHE), takes place October 17-19, celebrating top chefs from Nevis and throughout the Caribbean while exploring the traditions and culture of this small and sophisticated island paradise in the West Indies. Those interested in attending NICHE can purchase tickets for individual events or a complete package \$440 for access to all scheduled events as well as a walking tour of Mansa's Last Stop, a local farm and produce market, beach barbecue with martini and aged rum tasting bars at Coco Beach, Veuve Clicquot Champagne reception and gala (tasting stations) dinner complete with Hennessy cognac bar and cigar rolling at the **Four Seasons Resort Nevis**, aged rum and chocolate tastings prepared by the Federation of St. Kitts & Nevis Culinary Team. Call 869-469-7550; www.nevis-niche.com

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA: Book clubs and book lovers are invited to the **Third International Literary Festival**, Nov. 7-9. Three days of workshops, readings and performances will take place at **Jolly Beach Resort**. Book the *Booklovers In Paradise* hotel package, with 10 percent commission for travel agents. The \$809 cost per person includes four nights' all-inclusive accommodations (with all meals, drinks and activities), airport transfers, admission to the Festival workshops, and all taxes and service fees. Among the sponsors of the Festival are the **Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Ministry** and **Carib-World Travel**. Agents should contact Pam Arthurton in Antigua, 268-480-2987; E-mail arthurtonp@carib-world.com

For information on the Literary Festival, call 925-828-7740; www.antiguaandbarbudaliteraryfestival.com



CEO, Pesquera to Rebrand Palm Beach County

Jorge Pesquera is now president and Chief Executive Officer of the **Palm Beach County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)**. Charged with leading the \$10 million agency, he is responsible for Palm Beach County's most important industry: tourism. Widely acknowledged in the national arena as a talented leader in the hotel and hospitality business as well as a dynamic strategist in destination management, Pesquera announced plans

to rebrand Palm Beach County, in part to remind visitors that it is the cultural center of the state of Florida. Pesquera has other plans to enhance relations with the travel agent community.

Pesquera was president and CEO of the **Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association**; and was recognized as the Hotel Association Executive of the Year at the annual **Caribbean Hotel Industry Conference (CHIC)**. He spent 10 years as president and CEO of the **Puerto Rico Convention Bureau (PRCB)**, spearheading the construction of the \$450 million Puerto Rico Con-

vention Center and surrounding district. During his tenure, the PRCB was acknowledged as one of the best destination marketing organizations by top associations and industry publications. Pesquera is a member of the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI), the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE), and Meeting Professionals International (MPI). He holds a degree in hotel administration from Cornell University.

Visit www.palmbeachfl.com



ATME Honors USVI Commissioner

Commissioner of Tourism **Beverly Nicholson-Doty** was honored as an **Outstanding Woman in Travel** by the **Association of Travel Marketing Executives (ATME)** during the 2008 ATME Travel Marketing Conference in Las Vegas.

Nicholson-Doty was presented with ATME's Atlas Award by **American Airlines** for her exceptional tourism-marketing efforts since her appointment to office in March 2007.

"I feel privileged to be acknowledged among such an esteemed group of tourism leaders," states Commissioner Nicholson-Doty. "I am proud of the accomplishments the Department of Tourism has made in such a short period of time, and we will continue to strive for excellence in marketing the U.S. Virgin Islands in the months and years to come."

Hugh Riley, Director of Marketing for the **Caribbean Tourism Organization** formally presented the award as a part of the Annual Caribbean Tourism Summit in Washington, DC.

Nicholson-Doty oversees the Department's advertising and marketing plans, national and international tourism-related efforts and product development. Previously served as President of the USVI Hotel & Tourism Association in 2004.

She also served for three consecutive terms as Vice President of the Caribbean Society of Hotel Association Executives (CSHAE), elected by her counterparts in the Caribbean region.

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



Gallina Oversees Travel Impressions and Delta Deal

Travel Impressions (TI) has appointed **Charles M. Gallina** vice president and general manager of **Delta Vacations**, coinciding with the July 1, 2008 launch of Delta Vacations as a Travel Impressions managed brand. "Charly has been instrumental in developing our private label business of managed brands, so this was a natural next step for him," said John Hanratty, chief marketing officer for Travel Impressions. "His insight and

passion will surely help to enhance the Delta Vacations brand and its operation under the Travel Impressions umbrella," he added. Gallina brings more than 30 years of experience in the travel industry to his position. Prior to being named to his current post, Gallina spent three years as vice president of new business development and management for TI where he established the company in the private labeling of vacation packages by offering turnkey solutions for fulfillment, product, marketing and sales of third-party brands.

Gallina spent his first five years at TI

as vice president of sales with responsibility for the company's field sales team, customer care and group sales.

Gallina started his career with **Eastern Airlines** where he held various sales management positions in operations, human resources and sales, including regional director of sales and service of Eastern's GDS, System One. Gallina directed strategic planning at **Amadeus, USA** to advance the company's market share within the United States.

Call 800-284-0044; or visit www.travelimpressions.com

Summer Lasts Longer in Orlando

The Hotwire 2008 Travel Value Index named Orlando a "Top U.S. City for Vacation Value" and Hotels.com Hotel Price Index (HPI) named the destination the least expensive in the world. The Hotwire Index includes the top 10 cities where savvy travelers across the country can find the best value and entertainment options. The travel index is based on a statistical model that evaluated 50 U.S. markets for consumer vacation value. The discount prices on hotwire.com are then compared to published prices to help determine which places offer the lowest rates and greatest discounts to travelers. The Hotels.com Index is based on consumer prices paid for hotel rooms and comes from its proprietary database.

Not the Last of Summer

Visitors can squeeze in one more "summer" getaway without breaking the bank through Orlando's second annual Endless Summer™ promotion. Running through November 15, travelers can keep summer alive with "Get One Free" accommodation and attraction offers throughout the destination.

The program, created by the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Inc. (Orlando CVB) for the long-weekend getaway traveler, provides such deals as "Stay 2 Nights, Get the 3rd Night Free," "Stay 3 Nights, Get the 4th Night Free," "Buy 1 Ticket, Get the 2nd Free" and "Purchase 1 Round of Golf, Get the 2nd Round Free," with more offers available as the kick-off date approaches. The availability is during a time when Orlando enjoys 70-degree temperatures, lighter crowds, and a variety of outdoor activities and special events.

"Get One Free" offers are available at a wide range of accommodations from value to luxury including: Orlando World Center Marriott; The Point Orlando Resort; Loews Portofino Bay Hotel, Loews Royal Pacific Resort and Hard Rock Hotel at Universal Orlando Resort; Crowne Plaza Orlando Universal; Quality Inn Plaza and Radisson World Gate, to name a few.

"Free Ticket" offers include popular local attractions such as Gatorland, home to thousands of alligators and crocodiles; Fun Spot Action Park and Magical Midway, offering multi-level go-kart tracks, rides and arcade games; SkyVenture Orlando, an indoor skydiving experience; and Dinosaur World, featuring more than 150 life-size dinosaurs. A "Purchase 1 Round of Golf, Get the 2nd Round Free" offer is available at Falcon's Fire Golf Club.

"No matter your age, summer evokes feelings of fun, whimsy and a carefree attitude. And while the calendar may say that it's fall, we can still embrace the opportunity to hold on to those summer feelings a little longer through a quick-break getaway." said Gary C. Sain, president and CEO of the Orlando CVB. "Whether you want to take the grandkids to world-class attractions, hit the road with the guys for a golf-filled weekend, take that long overdue romantic getaway or relax in a spa with your best friends, Endless Summer in Orlando appeals to all and puts a little money back in your wallet in the process."

Scheduling Synergy

In addition, visitors can peg their travel dates to a blockbuster Endless Summer special events calendar filled with more than 15 culinary, cultural and sporting events, as well as one of the world's largest destination-wide Halloween celebrations.

In September, the Orlando CVB launches its 3rd Annual "Orlando Magical Dining Month" to showcase Central Florida's ever-expanding dining universe. From Sept. 1 - 30, 2008, participating restaurants will offer three-course prix-fixe dinners for \$19 or \$29 (excluding beverage, tax and gratuity) allowing locals and visitors alike to enjoy exceptional values at some of Orlando's most popular restaurants including; Emeril's Tchoup Chop, Roy's Hawaiian Fusion, The Oceanaire Seafood Room, Bice Ristorante, Graze Orlando and Fleming's Prime Steakhouse & Wine Bar. Additional events include: the 13th Annual Epcot International Food and Wine Festival featuring hundreds of wine, beer and culinary seminars and tastings; the Children's Miracle Network Golf Classic, bringing together nearly 150 top PGA Tour players in early November; the 35th Annual Winter Park Autumn Art Festival, a juried art show featuring Florida artists and live entertainment; and a wide-variety of haunted happenings from Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Orlando to SeaWorld Orlando's Halloween Spooktacular.

Culture Season

Orlando's thriving arts community also rolls out a new season of cultural entertainment with Broadway-series shows at the Bob Carr Performing Arts Center; professional-ensemble plays at the Orlando Shakespeare Theatre; family audience plays at the Orlando Repertory Theatre; and performances by the Orlando Ballet, the Orlando Opera and the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

More information on all Endless Summer "Get One Free" offers, participating establishments and special events is available at www.orlandoinfo.com/endlesssummer or call 888-675-438. While in Orlando, visitors can stop by the Official Visitor Center located at 8723 International Drive, at the southeast corner of International Drive and Austrian Row. The Visitors Center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. (closes at 4 p.m. on Thanksgiving, Dec. 24 and Dec. 31 and is closed Dec. 25).

For more information on Orlando, visit www.orlandoinfo.com

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



BEST BUYS

\$219 MASSACHUSETTS

The shores of Nantucket beckon from the retro-chic boutique **Veranda House** that's just completed a four-year refurbishment to its just-post-Mayflower edifice. Nightly rates from \$219 include breakfast, afternoon tea and twice weekly wine and cheese tasting in the gardens.

Fall on Nantucket is exceptional (and less crowded!) and for those seeking an autumn retreat there's an Autumn Escape package starting at \$656 for two, including two nights' accommodations, a one-day Jeep Wrangler rental or two Swedish massages, two fast ferry tickets, dinner for two at the 17th century Brotherhood of Thieves tavern and bottles of Nantucket Whales Tail Pale Ale chilled and waiting in the guestroom.

Visit **Tradewind Aviation** www.tradewindaviation.com for direct access from the New York metropolitan area to Nantucket. Call 877-228-0695; www.theverandahouse.com

\$3000 HAWAII

Whether you're "LOST", "Forgetting Sarah Marshall," looking for a "BACHELOR" or "Las Vegas", or searching for a whale, Hollywood has found a second home at **Turtle Bay Resort** on Oahu's North Shore.

Most recently, Turtle Bay Resort served as the setting for Universal Pictures' new hit movie "Forgetting Sarah Marshall."

To commemorate the release of the film, Turtle Bay Resort is offering a "Forgetting Sarah Marshall" package just for couples. The experience includes a four-night stay in a luxury oceanfront beach cottage, an authentic Hawaiian lū'au, dinner at Ola for two and a choice of surf lessons or a round of golf - just like in the movie. The resort's \$70 million renovation project completed in 2006 included new greens and course improvements on the Palmer course and a restored back nine on the Fazio Course. Packages are available from \$3,000 for four nights double through Dec. 23.

Call 808-293-6000; www.turtlebayresort.com

\$299 NEW YORK

hotel le bleu is not in Manhattan but a short subway ride from town is the 48-room hotel le bleu, located in the trendy Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York, offers easy access to this summer's hottest public attraction, New York City Waterfalls.

Perhaps the most dramatic of the locations will be the display under the Brooklyn Bridge, a mere five miles from hotel le bleu. The Brooklyn Bridge display is constructed of scaffolding which forms the backbone and pumps water from the East River to the top of the structure and back into the River.

Visitors are invited to experience the waterfall exhibits up-close on the **Circle Line's** three-hour Full Island Cruise, which circumnavigates island of Manhattan. Call 212-563-3200.

Rates at hotel le bleu range from \$299-\$329 through October. Call 866-427-6073; www.hotelbleu.com

PUBLISHER'S PAGE Continued from page 6

your overhead coupon insures a spot for your bag somewhere on the plane. The final screen of check in gives your additional payment due of \$30 so you swipe your credit card, grab your boarding pass and overhead storage coupon and head for the gate.

After a long line at the security checkpoint, and an intimate encounter with an overly zealous security screener, you finally arrive at the gate and shortly board your flight.

Once in the air a menu of in-flight services is distributed to each passenger. Included on this menu are the following ala carte choices: pillow or blanket - \$2, soft drink, water or coffee - \$2, alcoholic beverage - \$6, cold snack packet - \$5, hot meal (2 choices) - \$8, power port usage - \$5. \$17 later you sit back and relax to "enjoy" your meal and get some work done vowing to research teleconferencing equipment when you get back to your office. Total additional cost of your roundtrip ticket - \$94.

Oh and by the way, ever wonder what happened to the pay stalls that used to be in public restrooms. Well, the coin-operated doors have been retrofitted to fit airplane restrooms so be sure to bring a supply of quarters on the plane with you.

I will grant you that I may have taken the adoption of ala carte airline pricing to the extreme, but does anyone doubt that at this very minute there are meetings being held in airline boardrooms debating some of these ideas. It will be very interesting to see how the Northwest airlines experiment will be received and to what extreme airlines will continue to commoditize their product.

Doug Cooke, Publisher

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Today's active vacationers require complete coverage in pursuit of their next once-in-a-lifetime activity. AIG Travel Guard has launched an adventure travel insurance plan that provides coverage for many activities excluded in most travel plans, including bungee jumping, mountain climbing, sky diving and motor sports.

Adventure travel continues to be one of the fastest-growing segments of global tourism. Understanding the unique and rapidly changing interests and perspectives of adventuresome people is critical in serving this growing market.

"Adventure travel continues to be a high growth area for American tourism," said John Noel, AIG Travel Guard's chief executive officer. "Adventure travelers need coverage that the typical traveler does not - that's why we created this special niche plan. Not only does it include insurance coverage, it also has a special hotline that's a great resource for adventuresome travelers."

The Adventure Travel Protection Plan offers a range of coverage, including coverage for participation in athletic events, motor sports; mountain climbing, aircraft flying and air travel including sky-diving and hot-air ballooning. The plan also provides a 24/7 Adventure Traveler's Hotline* which offers weather reports and travel advisories, assistance locating trails and rafting locations, information on access issues, construction and detour information and locations of nearby gear shops, guides and outfitters. The plan also offers optional Cancel for Any Reason coverage and optional Car Rental Collision coverage.

AIG Travel Guard has also introduced a series of enhancements to its "Active Suite" of plans - the Adventure Travel Protection, Sportsman's Travel Protection and Tee, Tour and Travel plans. The enhancements include higher coverage limits and new features designed to provide increased coverage to travelers who continue to pursue their favorite activities while on vacation.

Call 800-826-1300; www.travelguard.com

Insurance Seminars

Platinum Seminars, the Atlanta-based company focused on providing continuing education programs to travel agents and agency owners selling premium and luxury travel, has selected Travel Insured International as its preferred supplier for travel insurance. Founded in 1993 by company President and CEO William (Bill) Brown, Platinum Seminars conducts agent training seminars at sea on many of the industry's leading luxury vessels. During each program attendees are instructed in effective skills for selling the quality of cruising they are experiencing. With over 3,000 agents attending its seminars annually on over 250 sail dates, Platinum Luxury Seminars is the largest company training travel agents to sell luxury.

"Platinum Luxury Society's 18,000 dedicated members count on us to provide them with the best tools and suppliers. Bringing Travel Insured on as our Preferred Supplier for insurance is part of our response to their expectations."

Travel Insured's new program lineup includes Worldwide Trip Protector, the company's signature comprehensive plan being offered to agents booking their participation in a seminar at sea with Platinum Seminars.

Most Travel Insured plans offer the Kids are Free feature and higher benefit limits, along with options to upgrade to Cancel for Any Reason, Cancel for Work Reasons, and Sports Coverage, among several value-added options. ID Theft Recovery Assistance is included in our Worldwide Trip Protector and Gold plans. Worldwide Travel Assistance, included with every plan, is accessible 24/7 from wherever clients are traveling. Visit www.travelinsured.com

MORE AGENT INCENTIVES

Travel Bound: Announced a new "Reward Yourself" program that gives agents unlimited credit towards personal hotel nights for any client hotel bookings made by September 30, 2008. Agents must register for the "Reward Yourself" program on Travel Bound's homepage, www.booktravelbound.com, by October 15. Personal travel booked using "Reward Yourself" credits must be completed by December 31, 2008.

For every 10 room-nights booked, the registered agent will receive \$100 credit redeemable for stays at any of Travel Bound's 23,000 hotels around the world. Reward credit is released in \$100 increments, but there is no limit to the amount of reward credit agents can earn or redeem.

"We wanted to give agents something extra - their own rewards program - as well as commission," said Nico Zener, Travel Bound's General Manager. "So now they can save money on their own travel at the same time that they earn money." Commission on Travel Bound hotels starts at 10%; at 15% for North American and Caribbean hotels.

Visit http://booktravelbound.net/reward_yourself

ISLAND DESTINATIONS: Raising the bar on its reputation for excellence in product and service, tour operator **Island Destinations** is including an enhanced post departure insurance plan with all bookings. The coverage includes loss due to trip delay, stolen or damaged baggage and more, is valid for all travelers listed on the booking, including children and infants. Comparable travel insurance on the market sells for nearly \$100 per person.

"Travelers don't expect the unexpected while on vacation, so it can be a challenge to handle a difficult situation while away from home," said Laurie Palumbo, chief operating officer for Island Destinations. We believe in offering AIG Travel Guard coverage for those unforeseen circumstances. This further exemplifies our unwavering reliability and dedication to our clients." While the post departure insurance plan is included for all travelers booking with Island Destinations, there is also an upgraded plan that is available for a reasonable cost. Call 877-903-2525; www.islanddestinations.com

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

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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.

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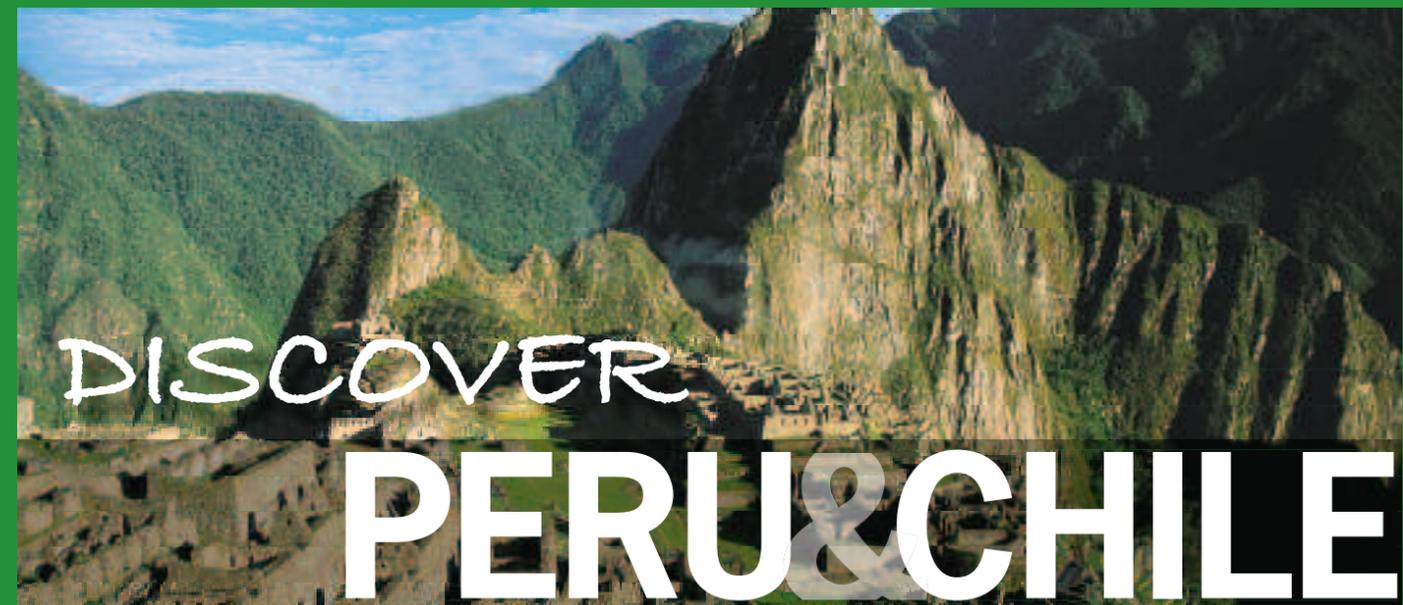


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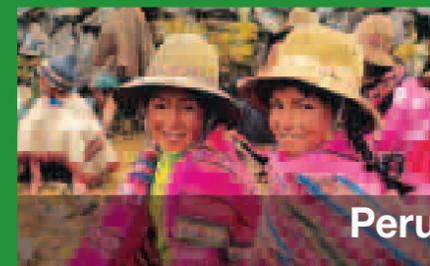
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