

APR 2007

Travel World

The Magazine for Destination Travel Specialists

NEWS®

BIT 2007:

*New Spectacular Venue,
A Record-Breaking Show*



Caribbean

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Samana— The New Destination
in the Caribbean

Confresi Event and Conference Destination—
Lifestyle Hacienda/Ocean World

Latin America

Belize: Mother Nature's Best-Kept Secret

Asia-Pacific

Taiwan: U.S. Tour Operators Offer
a Wider Selection of Tour Programs

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The Magazine for Destination Travel Specialists

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BIT 2007: A Record Breaking Show

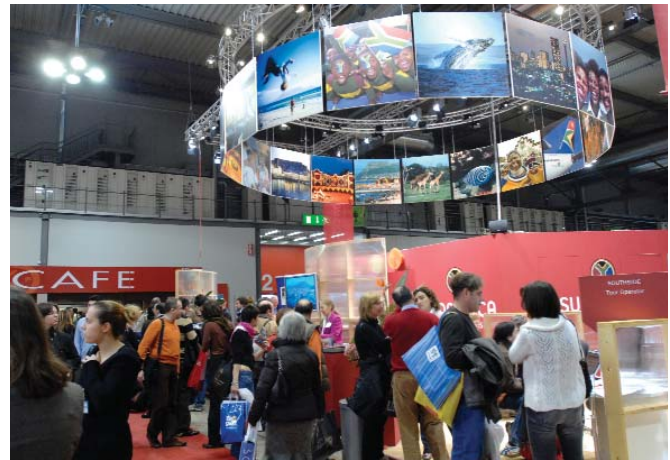
The 27th Edition of Bit, held for the first time in the new exhibition centre at Rho, was stronger, more international, and more innovative than ever.

Over 150,000 visitors flocked to the 27th edition of Bit – International Tourism Exchange – which took place from February 22-25 at the fieramilano exhibition centre in Rho. Of these, 108,000 were trade visitors: a four percent average increase on 2006 figures over the four days, a figure that confirms the event's continued growth. This success is partly due to the pre-registration service offered by the www.bit.expocts.it site.

"We are delighted with the increase in the number of professionals visiting Bit 2007 and the total number of visitors," says Adalberto Corsi, Chairman of EXPOCTS.

Over the two days reserved to trade visitors, Thursday and Friday, February 22 and 23, the number of professional operators has grown by 15 percent compared to the figures recorded over the same days in 2006.

"The figures show that Bit's new formula, with the first two days reserved to the professionals and the weekend open to the traveling public, has been greatly appreciated by tourism operators," says Carlo Bassi, EXPOCTS's CEO. "The 27th



The global attendance at Bit continues to grow: this year they welcomed over 150,000 visitors.

edition has shown, once more, that Bit is the landmark event for the tourism sector. The new shows, Travel&Motion and Boat Village, devoted to caravanning and the open air, and to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



ECUADOR IS COMING TO MEET YOU!

May 7, Atlanta, at the *Georgia Aquarium*

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William H. Coleman, Inc.

BIT FROM PAGE 3

yachting and sailing respectively, have also been a success, validating our 360° approach to the tourism sector."

Looking Toward the Future

The opening conference provided the ideal opportunity to reflect and debate the current state of the sector and on prospects for the future. According to the World Bank figures referred to during the meeting, from now until 2020 the world tourist market is destined to double, going from 800 million to 1.6 billion tourists, especially due to the new middle classes coming from emerging countries such as China, India, and Russia.

It is an opportunity that Italy must take full advantage of, which was a point stressed by everyone who contributed, but only if it knows how to create a system, capitalize on existing resources and concentrate on quality.

"In these six months," highlighted Francesco Rutelli, Vice President of the Council, "we have already achieved significant results thanks to an approach of listening to those parties involved, collaboration between the dif-

ferent institutional levels and the Regions, the introduction of structured study and analysis activities, creating an organizational process which amongst other things a new ENIT as an agency which involves private and public bodies, as well as the launch of a new portal Italia.it and a new brand which will identify Italy throughout the world."

In line with the area's expansion prospects, Bit presented itself to the world markets even stronger, more innovative and international than ever. There are record figures this year: nine pavilions occupied by two exhibitions at the same time Travel&Motion and BoatVillage, covering 65 thousand net square meters; 30 new international exhibitors; and over 38,000 pre-registrations including 14,500 Travel Agents, via the website. There are also record figures for BuyItaly, the largest workshop in the world for the Italian tourist product.

"From when I first arrived at EXPOCTS 10 years ago," comments Adalberto Corsi, EXPOCTS President. "I have seen this exhibition expand constantly. It is a world point of refer-

ence for the Italian tourist product and amongst the best international sector exhibitions. The attendance of the Vice-President of the Council demonstrates the renewed attention by the institutional world towards such an important area for the economy of our country and for which Bit represents an indisputable opportunity."

Success for Travel&Motion and Boat Village

Travel&Motion and Boat Village concluded amid great acclaim from both the public and operators.

The presence of several operators and the great influx of the public, on Saturday and Sunday, are proof of the success of the project, much wanted by EXPOCTS: "The success of Travel&Motion and Boat Village confirms the importance and central nature of the Piazza di Milano," comments Carlo Bassi, the EXPOCTS CEO, "and the key role that Bit plays on the Italian tourism scene. This wonderful and successful EXPOCTS project is proof of our ability to highlight new trends and transform them into both business opportunities for sector operators and important exhibitions open to the wider public. Travel & Motion and Boat Village have gifted tourism lovers a vision and a most comprehensive supply of the world of open air and nautical tourism. The challenge is met which will make us work with even greater enthusiasm at next year's twin shows."

Travel&Motion and Boat Village went beyond every expectation creating, over the four days of the exhibition, important networking opportunities, and the option to increase one's knowledge and events of great magnitude with exceptional feedback. The two new exhibitions are going to enrich the broader EXPOCTS project for tourism, a company which has been in constant evolution for almost 30 years and confirms and strengthens Bit's role and Milan as the undisputed capital of tourism in Italy.

FIERAMILANO: THE EXHIBITION CENTRE THAT IS CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

Fiera Milano turns a page, and shows how the international exhibition market is changing. Its new large and ultra-modern site - called *fieramilano* - is now fully operational and has met with the unanimous approval of the economic community. This approval is reflected in the widespread increases in visitors and the size of the shows taking place there.

In just over two years of work, the innovative plan by architect Massimiliano Fuksas has become an avant-garde exhibition complex, which combines record-setting dimensions with exceptional flexibility, technological equipment with visitor comfort, and total usability of the spaces with a pleasant atmosphere.

With its 345,000 m² gross covered exhibition space (plus an additional 60,000 m² of uncovered space), eight gigantic, virtually column-free pavilions, 74 meeting halls, 10 of which are in the Stella Polare convention centre, 84 refreshment areas, 14,000 spaces in visitor parking and 3,000 spaces for exhibitors, and a subway station (a rail station will open in 2008) in the site, the new Fiera Milano sets world standards in the exhibitor sector.

fieramilano, www.fieramilano.com

First Bit Tourism Awards Winners

At the first ever Bit Tourism Awards Gala ceremony, a process of recognition organized by EXPOCTS – Fiera Milano in collaboration with Panorama Travel and with the support of Regione Siciliana, excellence in both the international and Italian tourist industry was celebrated.

The votes for the Bit Tourism Award were cast by the general public, the first time that such a thing has been done in Italy, and by travel agents which have had direct contact with the markets.

The categories for the public vote ranged from preferred Italian city or region, to the overseas city or country, to the best tour operator and dream holiday. The travel agents could award prizes to tour operators, airline companies, preferred destinations and conference venues.

The public voted for Rome as the most desired Italian city and Tuscany as the best region. From the overseas cities, Paris triumphed while the USA was the favored country. But the dream destination for Italian travelers is French Polynesia. Operators in the sector the public selected Alpitur as the best Tour Operator and Costa Crociere as the favored cruise company.

The Tour Operator AdV won the prize for the "curious" question asked of Travel Agents. It also won the most snobbish and best client category. Emirates was selected as the preferred airline company by the intermediaries, while the best cruise company was Grandi Navi Veloci. The preferred destination for travelers, according to agents, was also French Polynesia. The preferred conference venue was, however, Italy. There was also success for the niche Tour Operator Kel 12 and Hertz for best car hire company.

Bit – International Tourism Exchange,
www.bit.expocts.it

SUNSET JAMAICA GRANDE RESORT & SPA TO HOST JAPEX

Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa in Ocho Rios will host the 17th annual Jamaica Product Exchange (JAPEX) from April 29 – May 1, 2007.

The event is sponsored by the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) and the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB).

"It's an honor to host JAPEX 2007 at Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa," said Sunset Resorts Managing Director Ian Kerr. "Jamaican owned and Jamaican operated, Sunset Resorts offers the true Jamaican experience – we are a natural fit to host Jamaica's key partners and showcase the spirit and sensibility of what the island has to offer to travelers across the globe."

Sunset Jamaica Grande Resort & Spa boasts the island's largest meeting facilities, with more than 32,000 feet of floor space. Countless outdoor areas for receptions and private dinners, including many beachfront locations, along with a top-notch catering team ensure every event is truly memorable.

TANZANIA'S MINISTER OF TOURISM HONORED IN NEW YORK



The Honorable Prof. Jumanne A. Maghembe, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, United Republic of Tanzania, was honored at a New York University reception attended by more than 200 travel agents and media. The February 22 event was the first in a three city Tanzania promotion tour organized by the Bradford Group. Co-organizers of the New York evening were the Africa Travel Association and New York University's Africa House. Highlights of the gathering were speeches by the Honorable Minister Maghembe, H.E. Dr. Augustine Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations and Peter Mwenguo, Managing Director of the Tanzania Tourist Board. The Tanzanite Foundation also provided displays of Tanzanite jewelry, mined exclusively in Tanzania.

Left to Right: Karen Hoffman, The Bradford Group, Jane Thompson, The Bradford Group, Geoffrey Williams, Africa House, New York University, Hon. Prof. Jumanne A. MAGHEMBE, Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism, United Republic of Tanzania, Rubi E. Valdez, Caterer, H.E. Dr. Augustine Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, Peter Mwenguo, Tanzania Tourist Board, Mr. Mohamed, NYU Student, Ed Bergman, Executive Director, ATA.

Tanzania, www.tanzaniatouristboard.com

Over the course of the three-day event, Jamaica's travel industry partners will have a forum to interact and discuss the industry in a dynamic professional setting. Attendees will include leading suppliers of Jamaica tourism product, travel wholesalers, tour operators from Europe and the Americas, and more.

Sunset Resorts, 800-234-1707, www.sunsetresortsjamaica.com,
www.sunsetjamaicagrande.com

INDUSTRY EVENTS

CONFEX WELCOMES AN INCREASE IN VISITORS IN 2007



International Confex 2007 has proven to be a huge success with onsite figures reporting a 16 percent increase in Pure Visitors and a 13 percent increase in Total Attendance (both pre-ABC Audit), the biggest rise in seven years. Although they are still to be audited, preliminary onsite figures show over 12,500 attended Confex 2007, up from 11,127 (ABC Audited) in 2006. This included over 8,300 pure visitors, up from 7,211 (ABC Audited) in 2006.

Confex attribute the growth to a more creative marketing campaign as well as the introduction of a number of new initiatives and feature areas. The organizers are also confident that the investment in the branding of the show will see a further increase in 2008.

Highlights at the show included the Confex Knowledge seminars; keynote sessions were screened live to adjacent theatres to fulfill the demand for the speakers. Confex also introduced the Oyster and Champagne Bar, the London Bar and the Blue & Green Bar, all providing fitting back drops for networking at the event.

"We did what we said we were going to do," commented Duncan Reid, Director, Confex Group. "One of the major things our research showed us was that visitors wanted to be inspired; so we created an inspirational environment. With the help of our exhibitors I'm confident we will keep building the event for 2008. Re-bookings are up 25 percent year on year, a rise from the previous year, so I know the whole show is on the up."

International Confex, www.international-confex.com

SUCCESSFUL MONTE CARLO TRAVEL MARKET HELD IN JANUARY

Following the great accomplishments of last year, the Monte Carlo Travel Market opened its doors to professional buyers and individual clientele for the third time on January 12-14, 2007. Like the previous edition, the exclusive event characterized by its personalized concept took place in the Grimaldi Forum's 4,500 sqm Espace Ravel and counted more than 11,500 individual clients.

Results revealed on a professional basis were not only rewarding, but also proved that this Prestige Travel & Luxury Lifestyle Exhibition has begun to establish itself as an increasingly successful business platform: 410 participating hosted buyers encountered 380 exhibiting participants, and the feedback provided by both

sides has been extremely positive and encouraging for the future of MCTM.

The selected buyers ranging from 32 different countries worldwide and the international variety of exhibitors were given the opportunity to create new and develop existing business contacts and partnerships. In particular the MCTM Meeting Planner allowed for both sides to pre-schedule their appointments and maximize business time. Furthermore, the novelty of the badge-reader provided exhibitors and professional buyers with useful, precise, and functional information becoming a useful aid in optimizing business objectives and for adequate follow-ups.

MCTM's ultimate goal is and remains to sustain itself as an optimal business location for all exhibitors, hosted buyers, and high-end consumers.

The strategy is driven by intense contact at an inner level, with the exhibitors and selected buyers, as well as an intense communication at an exterior level with the target audiences through the employment of multiple media channels.

Adding to this, in order to further meet up to the expectations of a successful business environment, MCTM conducted the customary satisfaction survey. The comments and opinions given by exhibitors granted valuable information which should help to insure that future MCTM editions will, on a continuous basis, be subject to improvement and will satisfy all participants in terms of providing an optimal business setting.

The Monte Carlo Travel Market 4th edition will take place in Monaco January 11-13, 2008.

Monte Carlo Travel Market, www.mctm.mc



The Africa Travel Association (ATA) Ethiopian Tourism Roadshow visited 4 cities in March, New York City, El Segundo, CA, Atlanta, GA and Washington, DC to raise awareness of Ethiopia's rich and diverse travel offerings and to extend an invitation to attend the ATA's 32 Annual Congress being held in Addis Ababa May 6 - 11, 2007. Left to Right: Matewos Gebremariam, Department Head; Tadelech Dalacho, State Minister Ethiopia; Eddie Bergman, Executive Director ATA; Mayor Dinkins and Doris Wooten, President ATA Chapter (New York).

MIDWEST TRAVEL SUPPLIERS FIND SUCCESS BY FORMING ASSOCIATION



Over 85 travel suppliers from Midwest regions have found there is strength in numbers when it comes to reaching travel agents in outlying markets.

By joining the Midwest Travel Suppliers Association headquartered in Chicago, suppliers are now able to stretch their marketing dollars and visit Midwest cities previously beyond their reach.

MTSA was formed in 2003 and consists of Midwest suppliers who represent a variety of travel products, such as airlines, resorts, cruise lines, wholesalers, tour operators, tourist boards and hotels. The members function as a team and focus on increasing their exposure and sales efforts through "Supplier Showcase Series," a five week series of trade shows and round table seminars.

The Association focuses on a 13 state region which includes

Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Kentucky, Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, and North and South Dakota.

The Chicago-based group meets monthly for planning, networking and special events. A single membership in MTSA is \$50 per year and \$20 for additional suppliers from the same company.

Linda Lydon, Regional Director for Aruba, is the founder of MTSA and serves as the Association President. She says the organization's greatest strength is its cost effectiveness. "Because we have no overhead and we co-op the trade show costs, suppliers are able to visit cities that they only dreamed of visiting before," she said.

The series begins each week with a trade show, round table seminar and sit down dinner. Participating suppliers pay \$250 per function or have the option to exhibit only in the trade show for \$150 per function. In addition to sharing costs, MTSA members also share in the decision-making and planning of the show series. Suppliers also take turns coordinating details for each week of the series. The Association benefits not only the suppliers, but travel agents as well. "Travel agents tell us that they love the personal contact," said Lydon. "They learn more about the travel products when they can have an in-depth conversation with the suppliers."

Midwest Travel Suppliers Association,
www.midwesttravelsuppliers.com



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 CS-25183



2007 - CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	CONTACT
M A Y			
1-4	Arabian Travel Market	Dubai, UAE	www.arabiantravelmarket.com
4-6	Travel Expo 2007	Baku, Azerbaijan	www.sadixovexpo.com
6-11	ATA Congress	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	www.africatravelassociation.org
10-12	BTC	Santo Domingo, DR	www.btc.com.do
10-12	MIT 2007	Tunis, Tunisia	www.mit-tourism.com
10-12	WTTC Global Travel & Tourism Summit	Lisbon, Portugal	www.globaltourism.com
14-16	COTTM 07	Beijing, China	www.bittm.com
14-16	Global Ecotourism Conference	Oslo, Norway	www.ecotourismconference.org
17-20	MITF 2007	Moscow, Russia	www.mitf.ru/en
27-Jun3	EXPOTUR - The Costa Rica Travel Mart	San Jose, Costa Rica	www.expotur.com
J U N E			
11-13	City Break	Athens, Greece	www.citybreakexpo.com
14-16	ITE HK 2007	Hong Kong, China	www.itehk.com
17-19	Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Conference	Miami, FL	www.caribbeanhotels.org
18-21	Asia Luxury Travel Market	Shanghai, China	www.altm.com.cn
J U L Y			
11-13	6th Mediterranean Travel Trade Show	Denver, CO	800-247-3323
22-25	NBTA International Convention	Boston, MA	www.nbtaconvention.org
S E P T E M B E R			
5-7	La Cumbre 2007	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	www.lacumbre.com
6	Moscow International Travel Workshop	Moscow, Russia	www.moscowworkshop.com
6-9	FITE 2007	Guayaquil- Ecuador	www.fite.info
9-11	The Trade Show 2007	Las Vegas, NV	www.thetradeshow.org
12-14	TravelMart Latin America	Cartagena, Colombia	www.travelmartlatinamerica.com
25-27	ITME 2007	Chicago, IL	www.motivationshow.com
25-28	Otdykh/Leisure 2007	Moscow, Russia	www.euroexpo.ru
25-28	PATA Travelmart	Bali, Indonesia	www.pata.org
26-27	North American Ecotourism Conference	Madison, WI	www.ecotourismconference.org
26-28	Top Resa	Deauville, France	www.topresa.com
28-29	No Frills Travel & Technology Expo	Bergamo, Italy	www.nofrillsexpo.com
O C T O B E R			
3-5	CIS Travel Market	St. Petersburg, Russia	www.reidtravelexhibitions.com
4-7	Adventure Travel World Summit	Whistler, BC, Canada	www.adventuretravelworldsummitt.com
8-11	Guanacaste Marketplace	Guanacaste, Costa Rica	www.guanacastemarketplace.com
10-12	Cancun Travel Mart	Cancun, Mexico	www.cancuntravelmart.com
11-13	Central American Travel Market	San Jose, CA	catm2007@canatur.org
16-18	BTC Conference 2007	Tallink Victoria, Baltic Sea	www.balticsea.com
31-Nov 3	DEMA	Orlando, FL	www.demashow.com
N O V E M B E R			
7-9	ALTA Airlines Leaders Forum	Cancun, Mexico	www.latamleaders.com
12-15	WTM-World Travel Market	ExCel London, UK	www.wtmlondon.com
17-18	The Philadelphia Inquirer Travel Show	King of Prussia, PA	www.phillytravelshow.com
17-20	FIT America Latina	Buenos Aires, Argentina	www.fit.org.ar
27-29	Travel Media Showcase	Palm Springs, CA	www.travelmediashowcase.com
D E C E M B E R			
3-6	International Luxury Travel Market	Cannes, France	www.iltm.net
3-6	International Golf Travel Market	Cancun, Mexico	www.igtm.co.uk

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AN ELEGANT STAY IN ITALY AT HOTEL BYRON AND HOTEL PLAZA E DE RUSSIE

Soft Living Places began operation in 2004. They focus on guest relations and on their ability to turn every stay into an experience of well-being and style. Today Soft Living Places manages two historic hotels - Hotel Byron in Forte dei Marmi and Hotel Plaza e de Russie in Viareggio - and the Green Park Resort in Tirrenia.

Hotel Byron was inaugurated in June 1990. After extensive renovations, this hotel unites two Liberty villas. A meeting place for nobility from the House of Savoia, the villas were subsequently converted into hotels while maintaining their original features. Located on a boulevard to the sea, the hotel is a short walk from La Capannina and across from a few of the most exclusive beaches of the prestigious Forte dei Marmi.

Today, this elegant hotel has 29 rooms and suites, as well as two halls for meetings and conferences that seat 10 and 60 people. Tennis courts and Versiliana Park are nearby, as are facilities for horseback riding, and the 18-hole Versilia Golf Course.

The hotel's restaurant, La Magnolia, serves the best of local and international dishes accompanied by a vast selection of wines. During the summer months, the restaurant provides poolside service, in addition to its three indoor dining halls.

All individually decorated, the rooms overlook either the sea or the large garden with a view of the Apuan Alps, and are air-conditioned with hardwood floors, bath and/or shower with marble décor, hairdryer, phone with direct line, satellite TV and minibar.

The Hotel Plaza e de Russie was completely renovated in 1994 to once again become the point of reference in Viareggio for sophisticated Italian and international clientele, whether traveling for business or pleasure. The building conserves its original elegance, exalted by exquisite marble, Murano light fixtures, and precious fabrics.

The hotel's 50 rooms all have hardwood floors and cherry wood furniture, autonomous air conditioning, minibars, and satellite TV, and the bathrooms are deco-

rated in travertine tiling. The hotel's restaurant, La Terrazza creates its delicacies, especially seafood, in a unique setting overlooking the landscape from Tino Island to the Livorno promontory, with the Apuan Alps behind you.

Hotel Plaza e de Russie is open year round and is the ideal starting point for visits to nearby Italian cities, such as Pisa and Lucca, and to enjoy Versilia, without having to give up the summer pleasures of relaxing on the beach or by the pool. A few short minutes away there is also a golf course which guests of the hotel are welcome to use.

Hotel Byron, info@hotelbyron.net,

www.hotelbyron.net

Hotel Plaza e de Russie, info@plazaederussie.com, www.plazaederussie.com

NEW MANAGEMENT COMPANY TO REPRESENT FINNISH TOURIST BOARD

Aiming to put a fresh face on the land of Midnight Sun, the Finnish government has hired a global marketing & PR representation company to promote tourism to Finland in North America. Aviareps Mangum began representing the Finnish Tourist Board on January 1.

"Finland is a progressive country with advanced technologies, sophisticated design, world class sports and is one of Europe's cultural capitals," according to Jaakko Lehtonen, Chief Executive of The Finnish Tourist Board worldwide. "Finland is a great country for visitors and business. We've chosen Aviareps because it has a pulse on changing lifestyles and has the marketing expertise to deliver our message."

"Aviareps' multi-tiered strategy will raise the profile of Finland and increase visitor totals while maintaining the Finnish Tourist Board's relationship with other Scandinavian countries," explains Mr. Christin Butterfield, Account Executive, who heads up the Finland team at Aviareps Mangum. A product rebranding, cross-marketing campaigns, road shows and interactive educational venues are all in the works. The Aviareps office will provide

tourist information to the general public as well as cooperation and support to the travel trade and media.

Butterfield's responsibilities are the development and execution of sales and marketing strategies for the Finnish Tourist Board. He is a 10-year veteran of the hospitality and travel industries. His associates on the Finland account include Ms. Maria Sarvanski, Marketing Manager, Aviareps Mangum. Mr. Fraser Teasdale, President Americas & Canada for Aviareps Mangum, oversees the New York-based operation and is chief executive for all its accounts.

Aviareps Mangum is the world's leading service provider in the aviation and tourism representation sector. It is part of the Germany-based AVIAREPS Group which has offices in 40 countries worldwide. Aviareps Mangum's client roster includes internationally represented entities such as Avis, Marriott, Greater Ft. Lauderdale CVB, NYC & Company.

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EURAIL ENJOYS +18% YEAR-ON-YEAR GROWTH

The Eurail Group, owner of the popular Eurail Passes allowing unlimited rail travel in a wide range of country combinations in Europe, reported a worldwide increase in sales of 18.3 percent in 2006 over 2005.

With a total of 445,000 passengers, Eurail also exceeded the 435,000 passengers who purchased Eurail Passes in 2000, the highest since the company was created in 1959. Revenues for the group increased by 21 million euros to 144.5 million, a 17 percent increase on 2005 figures.

Over the last few years, Eurail's popularity has been growing steadily. Like most travel suppliers, Eurail was badly affected when the number of overseas visitors to Europe dropped following September 11, 2001.

As the travel industry began to

recover from its global decline in 2003, Eurail's passenger totals rose commensurately with the rising number of travelers – to not only reach but surpass pre-9/11 figures.

Eurail Passes are sold to non-Europeans only, and travelers come predominantly from North America, Eurail's largest market at 53 percent, Asia (25 percent) and the Pacific (11 percent), regions that have all seen very strong growth. The most popular Eurail Passes are the Eurail Select Pass (allowing travelers to travel in any three, four or five adjoining countries) and the Eurail Global Pass (enabling travelers to explore all 18 participating countries by rail), representing 70 percent of all Eurail's sales.

In its unceasing quest to improve products and stay ahead of evolving travel trends, Eurail has expanded its range of Passes with more choices to fewer countries and shorter travel periods.

As a result, the range of Regional Passes (offering fixed two-country combinations) was expanded in January 2007 when Eurail added Austria-Hungary and Italy-Spain to the list, increasing the total number of two-country options to 18.

Additional expansions to the Regional Pass range are expected to be announced soon. Finally, Eurail's range of National Passes (good for exploring a single country by rail) has been expanded and now includes Benelux (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), Croatia, Ireland, Italy and Portugal. The EURAIL Group comprises 27 railways and shipping lines, as well as several bonus partners.

Eurail, www.Eurail.com

"AI BY AI" OFFERS FREE EUROPE TRIPS FOR AGENTS

The newest player in the adventure travel field is offering their "AI by AI": Amazing Incentives by ADVENTURES-Incorporated campaign.

They are offering agent incentives for their European product line where agents can earn free trips.

Agents that book three passengers to

Europe with A.I.'s Adventures Worldwide product line will be able to take their own Europe trip free of charge. Agents are also able to bring a friend if they book six passengers.

ADVENTURES Incorporated is the unique team at Goway that specializes exclusively in fun, adventure and active vacation experiences all around the world.

Full details of the "AI by AI" agent incentive plan can be viewed on Goway Travel's dedicated agent website: www.gowaya-gent.com.

ADVENTURES Incorporated, 800-387-8850, info@adventuresincorporated.com, www.adventuresincorporated.com

SPECIAL PRICING FROM THE 4-STAR RELAIS VILLA PETRISCHIO



Delightfully located on the highest hill between Montepulciano and Cortona – half way between Rome and Florence in the Tuscany countryside, your clients can unpack once at the 4-star Relais Villa Petrischio for any number of nights to discover and experience a Tuscan vacation. See www.villapetrischio.com for a view of each room and the standard pricing.

For the months of October and November 2007, Monday through Thursday, agents can discount the standard pricing shown on the web by 10 percent for the clients and receive a 20 percent commission on the B/B package of any three or four nights.

Standard rates and 10 percent to 12 percent commissions apply for all other times.

Relais Villa Petrischio, 888-867-2251, 303-282-0200, www.villapetrischio.com

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THE ALPINE LODGE IN FAIRBANKS OPENS MAY 1, 2007



Located near Fairbanks International Airport, the Alpine Lodge is a 115-room three-story hotel and is the achievement and inspiration of Fairbanksan and General Manager Yvonne Temple. "I want to bring the beauty of Denali Park inside," said Temple who had worked for Frank Rose at the Grand Denali Hotel when it opened in 2001.

Visitors will find bear tracks inlaid on the floor and copper salmon swimming on a pebble river that covers the front desk reception area. General Manager Temple hopes that the locally owned and operated hotel will exemplify warm Fairbanks hospitality. "I want it to have the ambiance and coziness of a bed and breakfast with all the amenities of a hotel. We've tried to include the facilities and services travelers consider important in lodging," said Temple.

Other standard amenities in the Alpine Lodge include king or queen size beds, complementary wireless high speed Internet access, cable TV, telephone with voice mail and free local calls, an electronic key system, and air conditioning. Each room will be equipped with a hair dryer, iron and ironing board, refrigerator, microwave and coffeemaker.

Alpine Lodge will provide complementary breakfasts, an outdoor spa, a fitness center and business center. They offer free shuttles from the airport. The majority of the rooms are identical but there are family suites and business suites available as well. The conference room holds approximately 75 people.

After June 1, the rates will range from \$199 - \$250 for the balance of the summer and the winter rates will drop to \$89 for a standard room.

Alpine Lodge, 800-455-8851, www.akalpinelodge.com

DENALI LODGES LAUNCHES ALASKA DENALI TOURS

The promise of a greater share of Alaska's \$2.4 billion tourism market has prompted Denali Lodges to launch Alaska Denali Tours, its new custom and packaged Alaska tour and vacation arm.

Denali Lodges, the 15-year operator of the Denali Backcountry Lodge and Denali Cabins, has now expanded into the lucrative Alaska tour and vacation market. Alaska Denali Tours offers custom and pre-packaged Alaska tours, vacations, lodging and transportation throughout south central and interior Alaska including

Denali National Park.

"Given the absolutely phenomenal growth of tourism in Alaska, particularly in the last three years, I believe moving beyond our existing Denali National Park lodging facilities into the vertical tourism market offers tremendous opportunities," said Sham Idnani, President of Denali Lodges & Alaska Denali Tours. "Over the years, out of state visitors to our lodging operations have repeatedly expressed an interest in a convenient, one-stop transportation, activity and lodging provider. It's that interest that prompted the launch Alaska Denali Tours."

In addition to pre-packaged two to seven-day Alaska vacations, Alaska Denali Tours allows visitors to build custom itineraries à la carte. "While coordinating custom itineraries does involve a bit more work on our part, feedback from our clients on this service has been overwhelmingly positive," said Idnani.

While currently limiting its operations to south central and interior Alaska including Denali National Park, Idnani doesn't rule out future expansion to other popular regions in the state. "We're always looking for additional opportunities for growth and will continue to research those opportunities," he said.

Denali Lodges & Alaska Denali Tours,
www.AlaskaDenaliTours.com

RANCHO BERNARDO INN NEARS COMPLETION OF ENHANCEMENT AND EXPANSION PROJECT

The Rancho Bernardo Inn located in the hills of northern San Diego County is nearing completion of its capital improvement plan, with an investment cost of \$25 million. With the upgrades to the property, the Inn will expand services for conference and meeting attendees, as well as leisure travelers.

The renovations at Rancho Bernardo balance the warm, intimate setting for which the resort is known with updates that will make the visitor's experience more enjoyable.

The Aragon Ballroom—which is part of a new 27,000-square-foot conference center—will now allow the resort to stage banquets, weddings, and business functions for groups up to 1,000.

The addition of a 2,500-square-foot pool and hydro-spa brings the total number of pools on property to three. The new pool will be surrounded by seven cabanas. The remodeled spa features an expansive outdoor garden area. The spa will also have a new menu of services that reflect the Inn's renowned culinary offerings.

The property's 287 guest rooms are being transformed with platform bed frames, new couches and chairs, upgraded linens, increased workspace, and 42" flat-screen televisions. Each room will also be WiFi accessible.

Rancho Bernardo Inn is located within 30 minutes of most of San Diego's main attractions including the Wild Animal Park, Lego Land, Sea World, San Diego Zoo, Balboa Park, and the Pacific Ocean.

Rancho Bernardo Inn, 800-770-7329,
www.ranchobernardoinn.com

GOLDSTAR SERVICE AVAILABLE ON THE ALASKA RAILROAD



The Alaska Railroad offers some of the best views in the world. Four double-deck dome cars shine as stars of the fleet; cars lined with crystal, original Alaskan art, and gold accents. The panoramic glass dome and open-air observation deck on the upper level is the only one of its kind on any railroad.

These cars are featured with GoldStar Service, a first-class experience on the Denali Star train that operates daily from mid-May to mid-September between Anchorage and Fairbanks with stops in Wasilla, Talkeetna and Denali National Park. GoldStar Service offers a confirmed seat in the upper-level dome car, complimentary beverages, a special GoldStar gift, priority check-in and boarding, priority seating in the lower level dining room, and a private outdoor viewing deck.

All Alaska Railroad coaches feature panoramic windows, reclining seats, open-air vestibules and tour guide commentary. Dining options include full-service dining cars on most trains complete with crystal and linen.

New for 2007, the adventurous can experience the whistle stop train service to Spencer Glacier. The Alaska Railroad and the U.S. Forest Service are bringing the backcountry of the Chugach National Forest and the northern Kenai Peninsula within reach. Passengers will board the Glacier Discovery train in Anchorage for the several-hour trip south along Turnagain Arm and choose from a menu of outdoor adventures for visitors of all abilities. Activities include short, guided hikes; backpacking or hiking on your own; guided rafting; and scenery and wildlife viewing. Plans call for the Railroad to phase in the new service beginning summer 2007. The first phase includes a whistle stop at Spencer where passengers can hike, including a day trip exploring Spencer Glacier; raft Spencer Lake and the Placer River, or spend overnight in the Alaskan backcountry.

More options include scenic rail travel and other transportation links to unique experiences "off the beaten path." New packages include trips for fishing enthusiasts, packages that span the Arctic Circle to the seaport town of Seward, to the gateway to Kenai

Fjords National Park. Indulge in Alaska through unique and exclusive experiences in the Denali backcountry, remote fly-in lodges, and the Kenai Peninsula with superb dining and some of the finest tour excursions in Alaska. The lodges are known for deluxe accommodations with award-winning cuisine all with access to excellent fishing, rafting, and hiking.

The Alaska Railroad, 800-544-0552, www.AlaskaRailroad.com

EXPLORE THE TATSHENSHINI-ALSEK RIVER OF ALASKA WITH JAMES HENRY RIVER JOURNEYS

James Henry River Journeys takes adventure seekers on an 11-day educational journey traveling from the interior of the Yukon to the Gulf of Alaska.

The opening departure July 10-22 is entitled "Natural History and Photography on the Tatshenshini" and will feature naturalist John Kipping and trip leader and photographer, Jimmy Katz. On this and the July 27-August 8 departure trip participants will take hikes to upland meadows and onto living glaciers. The photographic possibilities are endless. This program costs \$3,195 + park fees.

The second departure, entitled "Glaciers, Landscape, and the Imagination; Natural History on the Tatshenshini-Alsek" is planned for July 27-August 8. Tom Thornton, PhD, an associate professor of anthropology, will discuss the vitality of the Tatshenshini-Alsek watershed as a sentient cultural landscape. Visitors will learn to appreciate how interior and coastal Natives perceive their environment. They will also discover how Natives and non-Natives have negotiated this region over time, and how relationships continue to evolve in the present era. The trip fee for this program is \$3,195 + park fees.

The third departure entitled "Tatshenshini Wilderness Literature and Photography" is planned for August 14-26. Join veteran trip leader, raconteur and photographer, Jimmy Katz as he gives photographers inspiration and insights into improving their landscape and travel images. The trip fee for this departure is \$3,195 + park fees.

These trips begin with a scenic drive from Haines, Alaska into Canada's Yukon Territory. The group will raft through Alsek, St. Elias and Fairweather Ranges. Four layover days (non-river days) will give adventurers time to explore the mountain valleys and hike to glaciers. Nights will be spent at riverside campsites. Around the campfire, participants enjoy a wilderness gourmet cuisine. The journey ends with a bush plane flight from Dry Bay to Yakutat and then back to Juneau.

All prices include hotel accommodations (double occupancy) in Haines and Juneau; all on-river meals; services of professional licensed guides; instruction by a naturalist, anthropologist, and photographer; oar and paddle rafts; tents and river commissary; and ground, raft, and air transportation from Haines and return to Juneau.

James Henry River Journeys, 800-786-1830, jhrj@riverjourneys.com, www.riverjourneys.com

BROWN PALACE HOTEL & SPA RECEIVES MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR RENOVATION



Open every day since August 12, 1892, The Brown Palace Hotel & Spa is currently undergoing an \$8 million renovation of its guestrooms. The Denver landmark is updating the soft goods in all 241 rooms, and outfitting 199 rooms with new bathrooms.

The complete soft goods upgrade in all guestrooms and suites is scheduled for completion in May of this year. Additions include new carpeting, tiled entryway, television armoire, re-upholstered chairs and updated artwork. LCD flat screen televisions will also be added to each room.

The hotel's guest bathroom facelift began in 2006 and will be completed by the end of 2008. Each of 199 guest bathrooms will receive updated plumbing, new sophisticated fixtures, and marble/porcelain tile. Each bath will also be fitted with European showers.

The Brown Palace Hotel & Spa in downtown Denver provides meeting guests with 13,000 square feet of meeting space, accommodating groups of 10 to 500. The conference facility includes a full-service business center, professional AV team, full-service catering team, on-site bakery, a conference services staff, and a floral shop. Internet access is available in all meeting space and Web casting and video conferencing are also available. Additional executive diversions include four restaurants; fitness center; Top of the Brown executive floors; and the new 5,200-square-foot Spa at The Brown.

The Brown Palace is a Mobil Four-Star, AAA Four-Diamond luxury landmark. It is a charter member of National Trust Historic Hotels of America and is managed by Quorum Hotels & Resorts. The Brown Palace, 800-321-2599, www.brownpalace.com

THE UMSTEAD HOTEL AND SPA MAKES DEBUT IN NORTH CAROLINA

The Umstead Hotel and Spa, the new hotel that is raising the bar on luxury in the North Carolina region, has officially opened its doors for business. Located in Cary, introductory rates between January – March 2007 start at \$295 per night, based on double occupancy. The new hotel is expected to be an economic boon to the region and help attract upscale business.

Selected as a member of The Leading Hotels of the World before

it had even opened, the Umstead Hotel and Spa elevates the guest experience by offering state-of-the-art amenities side-by-side with the thoughtful touches of a world-class property.

The new hotel features guest rooms that include 42-inch Plasma televisions, pillow-top beds, Rivolta Italian linens, and signature bath products. Some guestrooms and suites will include balconies.

The Umstead Spa features 10 treatment rooms including a spa suite, manicure and pedicure rooms, separate men's and ladies lounges with fireplaces, "meditation" courtyard, and more.

Its signature restaurant, Herons, will highlight approachable yet stylish contemporary cuisine and will feature local, often organic, ingredient-driven cuisine, regional influences, and time-honored Southern dishes.

The Umstead Hotel and Spa offers more than 10,200 square-feet of flexible indoor meeting and banquet space as well as a 6,000 square foot outdoor lawn for functions. In addition, all guests will have exclusive privileges at the Prestonwood Country Club.

The Umstead Hotel and Spa features five signature packages for 2007 including: the Ultimate Romance Package; Herons Dining Package; the Prestonwood Country Club Golf Package; Umstead Spa Package; and the Umstead Wedding Night Package.

The Umstead Hotel and Spa, 866-877-4141

PINK SHELL'S CAPTIVA VILLAS OPENS IN FLORIDA

Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa is capping off its multi-phase, multi-million dollar transformation with the opening of Captiva Villas.

Captiva Villas, a 43-unit condominium hotel, features the finest design amenities. Each unit is situated on the beach with views of the Gulf of Mexico. Select units will have an oversized sun deck with private lanais, while corner units will enjoy gulf and bay views and private hot tub.

"The opening of Captiva Villas marks an auspicious milestone in the history of Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa," stated Bill Waichulis, General Manager. "We are confident that with the completion of the final phase, our guests will continue to enjoy the high-end luxury vacation experience associated with Pink Shell, further enhancing its reputation as a leading destination in the Southwest Florida area."

The new amenities and facilities featured at Captiva Villas include: Jack's Sea Grille, a full-service restaurant; a new, state-of-the-art fitness center; Sparky's Fun Park, a wet play area for families; new meetings space; and team building activities for groups such as Conch Shell Blowing, Wacky Beach Olympics and Sparky's Survivor Challenge, among others.

The transformation of Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa also included a renovation of the property's Sanibel View Villas and Beach Villas, followed by the 2004 opening of the resort's White Sand Villas.

Pink Shell Beach Resort & Spa, 888-222-7465, www.pinkshell.com

TIES ANNOUNCES DAVID SOLLITT AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DAVID SOLLITT

The Board of The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) has announced the hiring of a full time Executive Director, Dave Sollitt, to run the Washington, DC-based global organization, as part of its institutional growth and development.

"Dave brings to TIES an extensive and creative marketing background which will not only serve organizational needs, but serve the membership in new and innova-

tive ways—we look forward to infusing TIES with not only Dave's passion for conservation globally, but also his years of creative management and marketing skills," said Dr. Kelly Bricker, Chair of TIES Board of Directors.

"I've been looking for an opportunity to effectively blend my career experience and expertise with my passion for conservation for quite awhile. In operating at the intersection of commerce and conservation, ecotourism - and specifically working with TIES and its many partners - provides a remarkable opportunity to do so," expressed Dave upon his recent start as TIES Executive Director.

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES),
www.ecotourism.org

DON FORSTER TO HEAD UP NEW ADVENTURE PRODUCT RANGE AT GOWAY

Goway Travel has announced the launch of its' new specialist division: ADVENTURESIncorporated (A.I.). Don Forster, a veteran adventure and tour organizer will head up ADVENTURESIncorporated. Experienced as an overland tour leader across Africa and throughout Latin America, Don has also traveled "adventure style" in Asia and his homeland Australia.

ADVENTURESIncorporated, 800-387-8850, www.adventuresincorporated.com

THE TRAVEL INSTITUTE ADDS NEW MEMBER BENEFITS FOR 2007

The Travel Institute has announced a new line up of member benefits for 2007. These benefits are designed to equip travel professionals with the tools necessary to meet current industry challenges with confidence. New benefits include monthly white papers presenting some of the best current thinking on timely topics; a series of informative teleconference sessions presented by leading industry experts; and member-only discussion boards allowing the sharing of best practices. In addition the five percent discount on Travel Institute programs and courses has been increased to 10 percent and a new member-only newsletter will debut in March. These new benefits are in addition a \$20 Thank You voucher; and many other discounts on programs and events.

The Travel Institute, 800-542-4282, www.thetravelinstitute.com

KNUT HAENSCHKE APPOINTED VICE CHAIR OF ATS'S BALTIC COUNCIL



KNUT HAENSCHKE

The American Tourism Society (ATS) has announced the appointment of Knut Haenschke, formerly with the German National Tourist Organization in Frankfurt, to serve as the new Vice Chair of the organization's Baltic Council, which includes Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Prior to Haenschke's distinguished career with the German National Tourist Organization (GNTO), he started his professional experience in the airline industry at British European Airways, TWA and Icelandair. Most recently in the Frankfurt office, Haenschke was responsible for marketing activities worldwide.

However, it is perhaps his position as director of the Copenhagen Office from 1997-2004, which included responsibility for the Baltic States, that best qualifies him to take over as Vice Chair of the ATS Baltics Council.

Alex Harris, CTC, ATS Chairman, and Chairman, General Tours, said "ATS is on a growth path, since outlining its new Strategic Plan, we are fortunate to have attracted someone with Knut Haenschke's reputation and experience, to lead our expansion in the Baltics region."

The American Tourism Society (ATS),
www.americantourismsociety.org

NTA ANNOUNCES LISA SIMON AS CHIEF STAFF OFFICER



LISA SIMON

The National Tour Association Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Lisa Simon, CTP, has been selected as NTA's Chief Staff Officer. Simon has been serving the association in an interim role since last August. "Lisa brings to the table a love for visionary thinking, strategic planning and extensive association management experience," said NTA Chairman and CEO Randy Julian.

"Her strengths will complement the travel industry expertise and NTA passion shared by the NTA Board, its Leadership Team and our members. I see all good things on the horizon as NTA builds on the incredible momentum that we're experiencing."

Saying that she looks forward to working with NTA again, Simon noted, "My job is to support and implement the strategic direction and vision established by the NTA Board. Essentially, my goal is to be the best we can be to service our members and attract new members to this dynamic and innovative organization."

The National Tour Association, www.NTA.travel

BALTIC CAPITALS

Unique World Cruises is offering a "Baltic Capitals" FAM trip, October 12-19, 2007. This eight-day escorted tour of Vilnius (Lithuania), Riga (Latvia), and Tallinn (Estonia) is priced at \$1,198 per person and includes air from New York via Finnair, accommodation in four-star centrally located hotels, welcome reception party, buffet breakfast and dinner daily, transportation by deluxe motorcoach tour from Vilnius to Riga and Tallinn, sightseeing tours of Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn, and all local tourist taxes and airport transfers.

English speaking tour manager plus a local guide in each city. Single supplement is \$178. Airport taxes are \$278.

Unique World Cruises, 800-669-0757,
uwc@uniqueworldcruises.com, www.uniqueworldcruises.com

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Lifestyle Hacienda Resorts & Spa is offering a special combination package rate. This is \$89 per person per night and valid for five night stays.

It includes accommodations at Lifestyle Tropical Beach Resort & Spa with its 24 hour all inclusive food and beverages service, including four a la carte restaurants.

This comes with programmed daily activities including non-motorized water sports, tennis, gym, bicycle use, aerobics, pool and beach volleyball. This incorporates admission to Ocean World Adventure Park, per person, per stay and entrance per person to the Bravissimo Show. And this also includes all taxes and gratuities. The package is commissionable at 10 percent for travel agents.

Working together, these two properties form a strategic alliance which promotes themselves and Cofresi as a new destination for events such as weddings and receptions, conventions, and incentive meetings for as few as eight participants to as many 350.

Lifestyle Hacienda Beach Resorts & Spa,
reservations@hacienda-resorts.com, www.hacienda-resorts.com;
Ocean World Adventure Park And Casino, www.oceanworld.net

EGYPT

Foreign Independent Tours is offering an Egypt FAM April 18-26, 2007 and May 2-10, 2007.

This package includes roundtrip non-stop air JFK To Cairo on EgyptAir; two nights in Cairo at the 5-Star Sofitel Le Sphinx Hotel, including breakfast; three-night Deluxe Queen Nabila Nile cruise, including all meals; outside Junior-Suite Cabin; all shore excursions including entrance fees and guidance; first class sleeper train from Cairo to Luxor; first class sleeper train from Aswan to Cairo.

It also includes sightseeing in Cairo with lunch, along with entrance fees and guidance; all transfers within Egypt with local hosting; sightseeing and transportation in a modern air-conditioned motorcoach; and service of an English-speaking Egyptologist during sightseeing.

Price is from \$999 air and land. Companions welcome.
Foreign Independent Tours, 800-248-3487, www.fittours.com

EGYPT

Travel Egypt is offering an all inclusive FAM to Egypt departing October 22 from JFK. This fully escorted 11-day/10-night FAM features the Pharaonic treasures of Cairo, Luxor, Aswan and Cleopatra's Alexandria.

The program includes coach (economy) air from JFK; luxury hotels; deluxe 5-star four-day/three-night Nile cruise with upper decks outside Nile view cabins (featuring opening panoramic windows); all meals from JFK departure until return (with beverages); entry fees to museums and sites; all transfers within Egypt; portage in Egypt; tips (except guide); service charges; taxes; and port fees. Cost is \$1,695 an agent (plus air ticket taxes). Agent's companions (maximum of two per agent) travel at \$1,895 (plus air ticket taxes).

Travel Egypt, 877-778-3497, travelegyptusa@gmail.com,
www.travelegypt.com

ITALY

EAC tours, EUROPE AT COST, are offering a seven-night/nine-day FAM to Italy departing May 16, 2007. Stay in a luxury hotel in Bologna (the culinary capital of Italy), with FD visits to Venice, Florence, Verona, parmesan cheese factories, balsamic wine estates and other interesting sites. Cost is a 25 percent reduction from all listed guaranteed departure prices, starting at \$1,700 air and land.

It includes roundtrip direct air with Eurofly from JFK, seven nights at a superior 4-star hotel, seven breakfasts, FD guided tours, one rustic lunch at an estate, all local taxes and portage. Airport taxes are not included.

EAC tours, 800-322-3876, eacny@europatcost.com

IATA

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