

LATIN AMERICA

DAVID NEELEMAN'S BRAZILIAN AIRLINE, AZUL, TAKES FLIGHT

JetBlue founder David Neeleman recently launched his fourth airline, Azul Linhas Aereas Brasileiras S.A. The Brazilian domestic carrier provides service between Campinas (Viracopos Airport), Salvador de Bahia, and Porto Alegre. Three airplanes were added to introduce nonstop service from Campinas to both Vitoria (Espirito Santo State) and Curitiba (Parana State) on January 14. With a fleet of 78 Embraer jets on order, Azul will grow in 2009 to serve 25 cities throughout Brazil with 16 aircraft, and will continue to receive an additional jet every month for three years to operate 36 aircraft by the end of 2011.

Azul's Embraer 190 and 195 aircraft have ultra-leather seats in a comfortable two-by-two seat configuration (no middle seats) with a 31-inch seat pitch. The first five rows of each cabin, "Espaco Azul," offer 34-inch pitch, available for approximately \$13 additional per segment.

Azul will be the first airline in Latin America to offer live TV on individual monitors by the end of 2009. The airline plans to change the way Brazilians fly, bypassing congested hubs and offering point-to-point service with exceptional quality and lower prices.

"Having been born in Brazil, it's so exciting to be able to start a new airline in my other home," Mr. Neeleman said. "Brazil is the second largest economy in the Americas—and 10th in the world—but only about five percent of Brazilians currently fly given the high cost of domestic travel."

"There is tremendous unsatisfied leisure demand for airline seats because fares are too high. As a result, 150 million people travel by long-distance bus," he added. The first flight (AD 4064) departs at noon from Campinas to Salvador de Bahia. Three hours later, Azul's second flight (AD 4062) leaves Viracopos to Porto Alegre, in Brazil's southernmost state, Rio Grande do Sul. The schedule comprises five daily roundtrips.

Azul Linhas Aereas Brasileiras S.A.,
viajamos.voeazul.com.br/

Galapagos
Ecuador

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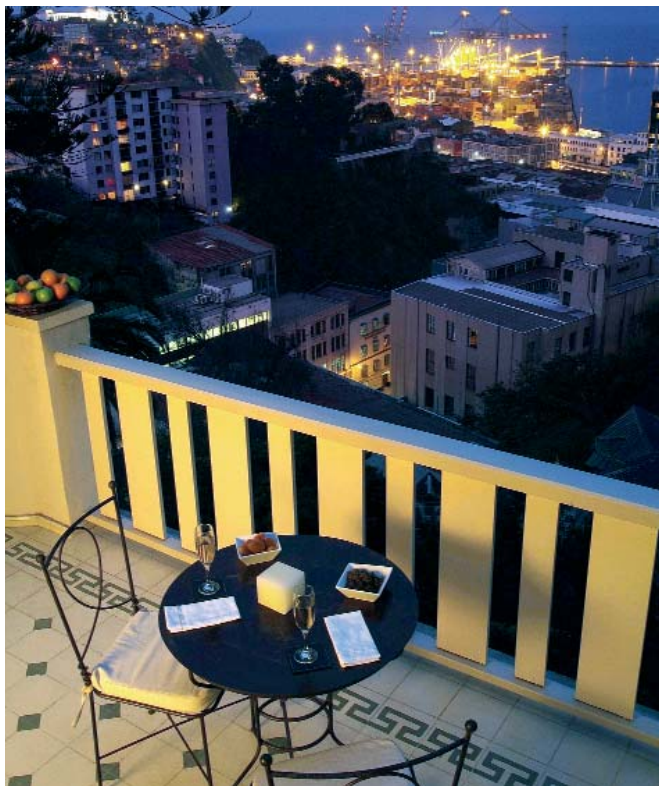
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For further information: sales@kleintours.com.ec

CASA HIGUERAS: CHILEAN BOUTIQUE HOTEL COMBINES CHARM AND ELEGANCE



Contrasting with the rusticity of Valparaíso, Chile, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a renovated hilltop antique mansion from the 1930s that looks like a Mediterranean villa, Casa Higuera boutique + design hotel.

Considered boutique for its cozy intimacy, the hotel has only 20 guestrooms—some measuring nearly 645 square feet—throughout four of its seven floors: five standard rooms, four premium, four premium superior and seven suites. Most feature an independent terrace and all come with parquet floors, electronic locks, windows with thermal panes, mini-bars, and more. A fully-equipped conference salon is available free of charge to those booking eight minimum guestrooms.

"The challenge was to create a first-rate hotel where guests are made to feel at home," say the hotel's owners Gonzalo Velasco, a furniture designer and expert in stylish design for more than 30 years, and Teresita Navarro, a textile designer. "We have chosen one of the most beautiful mansions in Valparaíso," they add, truly satisfied with their creation.

Niceties like a "Fig Sour" over illuminated port views; an infinity pool that literally "hangs" from the hill; spacious bathrooms with Italian-made bathtubs; guestrooms with antique fireplaces—all harken back to thirties' elegance. "One of our biggest challenges is to ensure that our guests feel at home and return again and again to relive a marvelous experience," says Enrique Papić, General Manager.

Casa Higuera, reservas@casahiguera.cl,
www.hotelcasahiguera.cl

KLEIN TOURS CELEBRATES CONSERVATION AND DARWIN'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth on February 12, 1809, one of the most significant anniversaries in science and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his book "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection" which sold out on the first day of its publication in 1859.

In it, Darwin's research argued at length about how organisms gradually evolve from common ancestors through the process he called "natural selection" by presenting evidence gained in his journey on the HMS Beagle.

Because of the importance that the Galapagos Islands have in science, they have been recognized by the United Nations as a World Heritage Site and the international scientific community has named the islands as a unique "living laboratory of evolution."

Klein Tours is inviting travelers to come and be part of this special celebration aboard its luxury fleet to see firsthand the fauna that led Darwin to his famous theory.

Information about packages and tours to the Enchanted Islands and continental Ecuador are detailed on the website.

Klein Tours, sales@kleintours.com.ec, www.kleintours.com,
www.gogalapagos.com, www.ecuadortrain.com

LATA RECOGNIZES AWASI AS BEST BOUTIQUE HOTEL IN LATIN AMERICA

The members of LATA (Latin American Travel Association) have chosen Awasi, an 8-room boutique hotel in San Pedro de Atacama, in Atacama Desert, Chile, as the Best Boutique Hotel in Latin America.

During the principal annual event hosted by LATA, the World Travel Market (WTM), celebrated in London this past November, Hotel Awasi was awarded the top prize, according to a members-only vote. LATA is a non-for-profit organization which coordinates with all of the operators and agencies in Great Britain who work with Latin America.

LATA is an organization which was founded in England and Ireland to promote tourism in Latin America. The association unites more than 200 companies, including hotels, cruise lines, travel operators, airlines and tourism boards.

"We are very pleased with this award. We are filled with pride and it shows that we are going down the right path," said in a brief statement, Awasi's general manager, Matías de Cristóbal.

He added, "This recognition is in line with the philosophy of the Hotel, summarized as creating memorable travel experiences, based on the lodging, the cuisine and the excursions, highlighted by unique details from the culture and environment, and always assuring comfort, intimacy and the individual preferences of our guests."

Awasi, www.awasi.com

LIMA TOURS' 52ND ANNIVERSARY WAS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR FOUNDER

For years, Lima Tours' Founder and late Chairman of the Board Eduardo R. Arrarte's dream was to invite the whole Lima Tours family to Cusco. A year after he died, that dream came true as the directors brought the staff there to celebrate its 52nd Anniversary recently. Over 120 members of the operators' team from Arequipa, Cusco, Lima and Puno offices met at the Sacred Valley of the Incas to enjoy three days of destination training, motivational experience, fellowship and social responsibility.

The program was put together by the company's Incentive Travel Division working under the brand of PeruDMC. Accommodations were at the new Aranwa Hotel & Wellness Resort in the Sacred Valley, which opened its doors before being inaugurated to welcome this VIP group. Participants enjoyed excursions to Tipon, Andahuaylillas, Pisac, Ollantaytambo, Maras, Moray, Chinchero, Machu Picchu, Cusco, Sacsayhuaman, Awanacancha and Willoq.

In Willoq, the staff was able to lend a hand with the annual health campaign for the community's children with the cooperation of CIMA; take part in the donation of



six computers to their school—starting an interactive program between students and Lima Tours employees; support childrens' nutrition through a trout farm given last year; and enjoy the traditional Christmas chocolate.

Special events were many — buffet breakfast at Hotel Monasterio; a traditional Pachamanca at Casa Andina.

Private Collection in the Sacred Valley; gourmet lunch prepared by Rafael Piqueras at the Sumaq hotel in Machu Picchu; a

local Paucartambo festivity at Libertador-Cusco; and the anniversary party at Wayra Ranch, Sol & Luna hotel, with a show of Andean gods and Peruvian Paso horses. Dinner was directed by Pedro Miguel Schiaffino and wine pairing by Jose Bracamonte. Closing words—against a brilliant full moon, were given by Maria Rosa Arrarte, President of the Board of Lima Tours, with live music and dancing lasting through the night.

Lima Tours, www.limatours.com.pe

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(Meals, open bar, daily shore excursions in Zodiac boats, port taxes, and embarkation fees).

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Punta Arenas – Ushuaia, 4 NIGHTS: MARCH 10

THE DISCOUNT ONLY APPLIES TO NEW BOOKINGS RECEIVED FROM DECEMBER 1st, 2008 TO FEBRUARY 15th, 2009, AND IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. **Limited availability**

TRAVEL AGENT DISCOUNTS ALSO AVAILABLE.



www.australis.com



MAYA RAINFOREST WELLNESS RETREAT FEATURED AT CHAA CREEK

At Chaa Creek in Belize, The Maya Rainforest Wellness Retreat is designed as a mind, body and spirit intensive to take guests to new levels of core inner health and strength.

Here, guests may take advantage of a package that includes luxurious treatments at the spa, with a facial, body wrap, massage, manicure and pedicure. Guests can also book outdoor massages in a thatched palapa overlooking the Macal River Valley, and be soothed by the sounds of tropical rainforest. Private yoga lessons are available on request.

In addition to spa treatments, guests will enjoy such guided jungle experiences as a sunset canoe ride on the Macal River, morning bird walk, nighttime safaris, horseback riding and mountain biking on miles of forested trails within the reserve.

Healthy cuisine is ensured at Chaa Creek by the on-property organic Maya farm where vine-ripened produce is harvested daily. The chef can also design a menu that caters to personal dietary requests for the meal options available with this package.

CHOCOLATISSIMO: A *Chocolate Rainforest Spa Experience*

Chocolate was the food of the gods during the golden age of the Maya civilization in Belize, and a treat reserved for society's elite in 500 BC. The Maya, once the world's most advanced horticulturists, cultivated Cacao beans that were used throughout

Mesoamerica as money...and what better exchange than the currency of love!

Chaa Creek's Chocolatissimo Package makes the perfect gift for a loved one this Valentine's season. It offers five choco-lovers spa treatments including the exhilarating Cocoa Massage and indulgent Chocolate Fondue Wrap.

Along with enchanting accommodations, candlelight dinners, hearty breakfasts and cocoa inspired cocktails and desserts, guests also enjoy a host of guided onsite activities such as horseback riding to an ancient Maya temple, mountain biking through a forested cacao grove, nature treks on jungle trails, and canoeing at sunset on the Macal River.

Package price is \$1,200 ppdo for three nights/four days \$1200, and \$1,435 for four nights/five days. Price is per person based on a minimum of two and includes transfers and taxes. Island combinations and villa upgrades are available. The package is offered all year round.

More information on these packages and other options are available on the website, under Vacation Packages.

Chaa Creek, 877-709-8708, reservations@chaacreek.com, www.chaacreek.com

HIDDEN VALLEY INN LUXURY MELDS WITH CULTURE AND ECOTOURISM

Hidden Valley Inn, a luxury hotel with only 12 cottages, is located on a 7,200 acre private reserve in the Mountain Pine Ridge area of Belize.

This intimate eco resort offers quality accommodations, fine food and attentive service in a natural environment unspoiled by man.

The flora, wildlife and birding here are like no place on earth. Hidden Valley Inn has just celebrated 20 years as one of the most established and luxurious resorts in the Mountain Pine Ridge of Belize.

The resort has just remodeled two rooms that feature new bathrooms with double sinks, spacious mahogany vanities and slate countertops, a claw foot bath, slate floors, and mahogany ceilings.

An outside granite shower that looks like a waterfall with orchids growing on the rocks completes the serene picture. In a combined living area between the two rooms, each side has furniture and handwoven hammocks.

Among the many packages available, detailed on the website, are four-night Discovery or Honeymoon packages; and seven-night Inland Adventure package or seven-night Mountain to Mangrove Birding package.

Situated in the Maya Mountains, this cozy jungle lodge is a convenient base for visiting the various scenic attractions of the area, while ancient Mayan cities and modern-day rural villages provide a glimpse of past and present cultures to travelers exploring this ecological retreat.

Hidden Valley Inn, www.hiddenvalleyinn.com

SUNBREEZE HOTEL & SUNBREEZE SUITES

AMBERGRIS CAYE, BELIZE



*The SunBreeze Hotel features 43 rooms offering the facilities and services of a resort while the SunBreeze Suites has 20 oceanfront fully equipped suites. *Dive packages from US\$1,232 ppdbl for 7 nights deluxe room accommodations, room taxes, 4 days local 2 tank boat dives, 1 tank night dive and round trip air transfers.*

**Packages valid through April 20, 2009*

SUNBREEZE HOTEL

email: sunbreeze@btl.net
website: www.sunbreezehotel.com
toll free: 1-800-688-0191

SUNBREEZE SUITES

email: sunbreesesuites@sunbreesesuites.com
website: www.sunbreesesuites.com
toll free: 1-800-820-1631

SUNBREEZE HOTEL AND SUNBREEZE SUITES, OFFER ROMANTIC GETAWAY FOR TWO

Two resorts in the heart of Ambergris Caye, Belize, form a crescent that embraces the waterfront as well as its white sandy area, palm and tropical garden complete with a fresh water pool.

SunBreeze Hotel uniquely provides its guests with easy access to island and mainland happenings while simultaneously offering a personal haven for relaxation.

SunBreeze Hotel offers spacious air-conditioned deluxe rooms with partial ocean and garden views, equipped with modern comforts including cable television, direct dial telephones, daily maid and laundry services and hot spot wireless internet.

SunBreeze Suites offers a private ocean view balcony plus a beautifully furnished suite that includes a living room, dining room, fully equipped kitchen complete with refrigerator, stove, cookware, china and flatware, a beautifully appointed bathroom with shower and a bedroom and are central air-conditioned with ceiling fans, cable television, telephones, hair dryers and clock radios.

The Romantic Getaway package, valid to December 18, is \$1,650 per couple. It includes seven-night accommodation with room taxes, one-hour massage; two half-day snorkel trips; and roundtrip transfers on Maya Island Air Belize International.

SunBreeze Hotel, 800-688-0191, sunbreeze@btl.net, www.sunbreeze.net;
SunBreeze Suites, 800-820-1631, sunbreesesuites@sunbreesesuites.com, www.sunbreesesuites.com

AUSTIN-LEHMAN ADVENTURES ADDS THREE NEW PANAMA DEPARTURES

New for 2009 on Austin-Lehman Adventures' (ALA) list of iconic destinations for families is a nine-day/eight-night Panama Family: Reef & Rainforest Adventure with three departures scheduled



SUNBREEZE HOTEL AND SUNBREEZE SUITES

in spring and summer breaks starting in April.

The ppdo rate is \$3,498 (single supplement \$780), with children ages seven and up at \$3,148 for first child and \$2,798 for each additional child. Tour dates are April 11-19; June 27-July 5 and July 11-19.

Guests can see monkeys, toucans and elusive wild boars on rainforest treks or aerial tram. They'll hike to the top of Volcano Baru with views of the Caribbean and Pacific and explore the engineering feat of the Panama Canal. Visits include a coffee plantation, butterfly farm, and ancient ruins.

Lodging is at the Gamboa Rainforest Lodge, Casa Grande Bambito in the Bambito Highlands with its fine dining and a wine cellar, and Hotel Playa Tortuga on the Atlantic.

Dan Austin, ALA co-founder and director, says "Panama is the new, hot destination for 2009. It's the perfect place for adventurous families looking for that undiscovered, undeveloped slice of paradise. It has so much to offer kids in terms of discovery, watchable wildlife, colorful culture and warm friendly people."

Austin-Lehman Adventures gives guests a comprehensive and authentic insider's view of regions visited through terrain-specific multi-sport activities. On this trip, guests will whitewater raft, kayak, snorkel and ride horses.

The nearly all-inclusive rate (exclusive of round trip air to/from Panama City) includes accommodations, meals, guides, entry fees, ground transportation and more.

"Our programs are about the luxury of learning, stimulating activity and the tender loving care we lavish on our guests," says Paul Lehman, ALA founding partner, noting that his company's six-guests-to-one-guide ratio has set an industry standard that makes these immersive trips personally rewarding.

Austin-Lehman Adventures,
800-575-1540, info@austinlehman.com,
www.austinlehman.com



Secluded Inn offering personal service, twelve luxury cottages with fire-places, pool and hot tub. Situated on 7200 acres of private reserve in the Maya Mountains. Ten waterfalls, idyllic pools set in tropical jungle, 90 miles of trail, hiking, biking, wildlife, birding on property. Tours to ruins, caves, canoeing, horse riding.



Tel: 00-501-822-3320
Toll Free: 1-866-443-3364
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