



*Southern California's Jewel Called*  
**LA JOLLA**

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TRAVEL WORLD NEWS - SECTION FOUR - MARCH 2008

# Southern California's Jewel Called La Jolla

A faceted coastal gem for getaways.

HELEN KITTI SMITH

**T**he shimmering village of La Jolla, California, is set amidst the sapphire Pacific Ocean and the multi-hued pearl that is the city of San Diego. "La Jolla" is Spanish for "gem." This name reflects its beauty.

Recognized by its own zip-code 92037, La Jolla resides within San Diego, the third largest city in California, whose own renown not only encompasses warmth, but also is recognized for its leisurely lifestyle. San Diego is the home of the San Diego Padres baseball, the renovated Gas Lamp Quarter downtown, and the largest US Naval Base on the West Coast. Some fifteen miles from downtown San Diego, the village of La Jolla claims its stake. There it celebrates a unique sense of self, accorded it by a local and global audience.

This little village of 42,000 residents insures that its Mediterranean architecture remains an integral part of its life-style, that lunch-hour ocean swims occur as reliably as sea breezes, and that art persists as a constant factor in its cultural life. La Jolla is one of North America's top 100 artist towns, home to some fourteen galleries within its narrow confines: a business district of a mere 30 short blocks.

La Jollans are committed to their nativeroots. Many born here may leave for schooling, but a return is imminent for the majority: back to its safe environs and diverse offerings. One might consider its eclectic mix of people the main attraction, or even the art that lures its very savvy collectors, or perhaps the rejuvenating spirit that comes from its magical perch above the Pacific. Whatever the reason - and certainly more than these three - La Jolla sparkles and reflects its name.

## Landscapes

Alluvial cliffs hug the sinuous coastline and define La Jolla's western boundary as she meets the Pacific. Seabirds and mammals congregate amidst the rocky shallows off La Jolla Cove. They share their homes with humans who stroll on the coastal path. Both bask in the languid sunshine, both refresh in the temperate warmth. All enjoy this natural setting that reveals so much of La Jolla's enchantment. Seal Rock, a mammal reserve, lies just offshore.

Sea lions have adopted a cove - originally destined as a Children's Pool - protected by a seawall constructed long ago. Sand now occupies most of it, which makes it ideal for the animals to claim it as their particular beach. Humans dispute its destiny. But sea lions, unaware of the unfolding drama, continue to revel there while observers continue to delight in their antics. This is but one of La Jolla's imprints.

La Jolla Underwater Park and Ecological Reserve is a favorite of scuba divers and snorkelers. For intrepid climbers who can negotiate 300 feet-high cliffs, Blacks Beach is the spot for nude swimming. This two-mile sandy strip just north



HELEN KITTI SMITH

La Valencia Hotel and Sky Room Restaurant with extraordinary Pacific Ocean view.

of La Jolla Shores is an insider's secret, though anyone can partake. Requirements are simply tenacious feet.

## La Jolla Hotels

The long-established seaside hotels are another La Jolla hallmark. The 1926 classic La Valencia Hotel overlooks La Jolla Cove. Its mosaic-tiled tower and pink façade frame La Valencia's posh 116 rooms, suites and villas. They reflect the lovely California/Spanish décor of a by-gone era. A member of Preferred Hotels Worldwide, La Valencia is the meeting place of San Diego's movers and shakers, known to congregate in its rich mahogany Whaling Bar. The exclusive dining perch The Sky Room offers only twelve tables in an assuredly intimate setting. Its sensational views over La Jolla Cove are complimentary.

La Valencia's current "Bed and Breakfast Package" includes accommodations for one night, breakfast (client's choice of locale: in room or at the Mediterranean Room which has a breath-taking view), arrival welcome amenity, valet parking, and fitness center use. Village view rooms are \$358/ Ocean Views are \$428. (10% agency commission.)

**La Valencia Hotel, [www.lavalencia.com](http://www.lavalencia.com)**

The Hotel Parisi across Prospect Avenue is La Jolla's only holistic, Zen-forward, feng-shui-ed, senses-oriented property that features 29 rooms. With that list of adjectives, this

hotel must resonate to its own California beat. And it does so nicely. Amidst original art and custom-designed furniture, this boutique hotel is a repeat favorite for the business traveler (location and amenities right in La Jolla's heart) as for the leisure and luxury tourist (who often seek sensual comforts). From its choice of 40 different in-room spa treatments, the Parisi's featured 'Zen-Touch/Shiatsu Bodywork' stands out. This is an experience that entails personalized assessments prior to treatment and individual protocols for follow-up.

The Hotel Parisi offers an unique Sunday-Thursday "Healing Arts Package" for \$1111 (its address is 1111 Prospect Avenue) that includes two-nights, partial ocean-view suite and two hours of its 'Zen-Touch Shiatsu Bodywork' treatment. A one-night 'Romance Package' sells for \$595, complete with champagne, rose petals, chocolates and two holistic therapy treatments. The Hotel Parisi has an on-call Clinical Psychologist whose direct number may be accessed from each room...*very California!* A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Hotel Parisi infuses modern style and sensitivity as it pampers its guests. (10 – 15% agency commission.)

#### **Hotel Parisi, [www.hotelparisi.com](http://www.hotelparisi.com)**

The Grande Colonial Hotel, a member of Historic Hotels of America, was also opened in 1926. The first fireproof hotel west of the Mississippi, its recently-concluded \$5 M renovation insures an Old World feel that is couched in Southern California style. An additional 18 new suites now join its 75 rooms and suites, a result of The Grand Colonial's purchase of the adjacent Little Hotel by the Sea. The new suites offer the perfect lay-out for families who want to both experience the heart of La Jolla and be only steps from the sea lions in the Children's Pool. At press time, The Grande Colonial will be completing an additional \$2.5 M rooms and window replacement upgrade in the 'grande dame' itself. The current "Bed and Breakfast Package" starts at \$255 for standard room and breakfast. (10% agency commission.)

#### **The Grande Colonial Hotel, [www.thegrandecolonial.com](http://www.thegrandecolonial.com)**

### **Diversions**

High karat gold and platinum frame La Jolla at sunset, with shimmers of silver veining often seen at dusk. Add to this spectacular landscape the variety of theatre, museums, restaurants, and the world-renowned science and research centers at home here, and one quickly distinguishes plebian trinkets from posh gems. This is La Jolla: a multi-faceted experience.

### **Theatre**

The La Jolla Playhouse, founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, today serves as the debut theatre for shows that are Broadway-destined. The quality of its production and the professionalism of its artists set it apart from imitators. Gregory Peck, who had attended La Jolla



Wonders of Undersea Camouflage: Sea Dragon, Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institute for Oceanography.

Elementary School, knew one day his hometown would house a professional theatre. Performers who have graced its stage reveal a list of 1940s "Who's Who": Charlton Heston, Groucho Marx, Eve Arden, David Niven and Jane Wyatt (former first wife of Former President Ronald Reagan), among others. John Waters' comedy *Cry-Baby* was featured during this writer's La Jolla journey. A wacky, juvenile-delinquent musical comedy, it is slated for an April Broadway opening.

#### **La Jolla Playhouse, [www.lajollaplayhouse.com](http://www.lajollaplayhouse.com)**

### **Museum**

The Museum of Contemporary Art occupies the renovated Ellen Browning Scripps' oceanfront home that was rebuilt in 1915, after her vengeful gardener simply burned the original house down. She endowed it to La Jolla, one of many gifts this far-sighted philanthropist bequeathed. Today, after its 1996 expansion and renovation, this 60,000 sq. ft. space commands a sweeping ocean view. It also doubles as a dream-like backdrop for special events and weddings. This bilingual institution is a few blocks walking distance from the described La Jolla hotels. It offers evening classes, free admission and innovative exhibitions.

#### **The Museum of Contemporary Art, [www.mcasd.org](http://www.mcasd.org)**

### **Aquarium**

A short drive from La Jolla is the celebrated Birch Aquarium at Scripps. It overlooks the Pacific with a majestic view, on land again donated by Ms. Scripps. This unique aquarium-museum is a repository for oceanography, whose mission is to interpret research from Scripps Institution and promote ocean conservation. Over 380 fish and invertebrate species reside here, one of the world's rare oceanographic museums. More than 400,000 visitors experienced it in 2007. Admission for adults is \$11.

The Birch Aquarium at Scripps celebrates The Gray Whale Season that began on December 15, 2007, and extends through the end of March 2008. The whales' annual epic journey can be observed during a daily 3.5 hour whale-watching cruise in local waters. With staff naturalists leading the expedition, the Aquarium offers a rich experience for nature-lovers. Prices are \$30 pp weekday, and \$35 pp weekends. (Discounts available for groups of 20 +;

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Net rates to travel agents.)

**Birch Aquarium at Scripps,**

[www.aquarium.ucsd.edu](http://www.aquarium.ucsd.edu); [www.scripps.ucsd.edu](http://www.scripps.ucsd.edu)

## Bookstore

A village community that is peopled by global sophisticates is, by definition, a locale that requires a reading universe of world-class resources. La Jolla residents have the distinct opportunity to support one of the few independent bookstores left in America.

And they make history each time they do so.

Nancy Warwick is the current director of her family's bookstore, the eponymous Warwick's on Girard Avenue. A savvy leader, Nancy assumed the store's management several years after accomplishing a PhD in Anthropology.

Her grandfather founded Warwick's in Minnesota in 1896, but he left that cold weather to establish warm roots in La Jolla, in the 1930's. His paper-goods store was the order of the day. He was a purveyor of books as well. Her grandmother worked at the store until age 96. Her parents assumed its stewardship throughout the 1970s and '80s. There was an age when Hallmark cards monopolized sentiments. Today, along with a well-read staff, Nancy has updated or introduced in-demand items: hand-made stationery, leather photo albums, sophisticated calligraphy supplies. Warwick's' continued successes validate her business instincts.

An independent bookstore may seem a relic, but the repeat customers who frequent Warwick's consider it anything but a thing of the past. This "community marketplace" - as Nancy refers to her store - serves ideas, sells books, suggests 'must-reads' and as importantly, sustains the La Jolla community.

**Warwick's, [www.warwick.com](http://www.warwick.com)**

## Restaurants

Between the freshly caught Pacific seafood and the Chino farms marketplace (where organically-grown products move from farmer to chef - sans middleman), La Jolla restaurateurs cater to a demanding Southern California palate.

The following list of La Jolla favorites does not adequately convey the ambience nor specialties for which each is recognized. But these restaurants are a sure bet. Group reservations are always accommodated: Sante - where authentic Italian food is served with the lightest touch; Roppongi - where creative South Asian cuisine merges with California flare; Azul La Jolla - where breathtaking views frame exquisite Sunday brunches; Jacks - where a retrofitted mall houses myriad restaurants, and The Cottage - where outdoor meals are served California casual and California chic.

**Sante, [www.santeristorante.com](http://www.santeristorante.com);**

**Roppongi, [www.roppongiusa.com](http://www.roppongiusa.com);**

**Azul La Jolla, [www.azul-lajolla.com](http://www.azul-lajolla.com);**

**Jacks, [www.jackslajolla.com](http://www.jackslajolla.com);**

**The Cottage, [www.cottagelajolla.com](http://www.cottagelajolla.com)**

## DESERT ADVENTURES CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH DISCOUNT



Desert Adventures, the award-winning eco-tour company is turning 20 years old this year and to celebrate they are giving a \$20 per person discount off their eco-tours throughout 2008.

For two decades, Desert Adventures has amazed visitors from around the world with the beauty of the famous San Andreas Fault. Guests on the famed red jeep tours come away astounded by the history and splendor of their nearly 1,000-acre private desert site, located just minutes from the Desert Resort Communities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, La Quinta, and Indio, California. Nowhere else can tourists view an active fault.

Their "Adventure Camp" features authentic recreations of a Cahuilla Indian Village, an Earthquake Education Center, a recreated Pioneer Homestead, and a Frontier Mining Town complete with a walk-through mine, gold panning, and facilities for events up to 1,000 guests.

Their evening tours reveal completely different landscape than seen during daylight. The desert comes alive at night. Animals unique to the region come out to explore, illuminated by the light of the star-filled sky.

The brainchild of Mary Dungans and her husband, Charlie, Desert Adventures started as a tiny three-jeep Mom & Pop company. Since then, Desert Adventures has grown and expanded to 15 jeeps, nearly 40 employees, and now offers variety of tours and special events.

Desert Adventures is the original, largest, and most respected outdoor adventure and eco-tour company in the Palm Springs Desert Resorts Communities, offering exclusive and one-of-a-kind tours and eco-adventures.

They have won numerous awards from local, state, and federal governments and travel organizations because of their mix of soft adventure and entertainment with an in-depth exploration of the history, culture, geology, plants and animals of the Southern California desert.

Perfect for kids, adults, seniors and groups, Desert Adventures provides year-round eco-tours with hands-on displays and activities and events designed to excite and stimulate an interest in ecology and learning.

Desert Adventures, [mary@red-jeep.com](mailto:mary@red-jeep.com), [www.red-jeep.com](http://www.red-jeep.com)

## MCALLEN INTERNATIONAL BIRDING FESTIVAL APRIL 6-17, 2008

The McAllen International Birding Festival will take place from April 6-17 2008. The Texas Tropics Nature Festival has a new look.

This year, they are focusing on international birding experiences throughout South Texas, Mexico, and Central America. At the 2008 McAllen International Birding Festival, travel to Monterrey, Mexico, Texas' Rio Grande Valley and Belize where the birding is spectacular.

The three birding destinations are priced separately, so guests can bird one, two or all three. Enjoy expert guides and the best birding locations.

Bird in the Valley and internationally with friends and make new ones with similar interests. International trips will be limited in size so it is recommended to register early.

McAllen Chamber of Commerce, 877-MCALLEN,  
[www.mcallencvb.com](http://www.mcallencvb.com)

## CENTRAL EUROPE RALLY TO BE LAUNCHED IN 2008

The Dakar Rally, originally a Paris to Dakar (capital of Senegal in Africa) race of endurance and adventure for cars, trucks and motorcycles held annually since 1979, came to an abrupt halt last month when the 2008 Rally was cancelled just hours before the race's start in Lisbon, Portugal. ASO (Amaury Sport Organization), the Dakar's creator and operator made the painful decision in consideration of terrorist attacks and threats in several African countries.

These countries are all along the colorful but back-breaking route that was established 30 years ago and which leads through the Sahara and Central Africa.

ASO was in the advanced stages of planning other, similar off-road rallies that they were to launch in 2009 under the name "Dakar Series" to show that these races, though run in different parts of Europe and the world, are just as technically demanding as the original Paris-Dakar rally.

To somehow make it up to the hundreds of deeply disappointed competitors, ASO decided to move the introduction of the Dakar Series up a year.

The new Central Europe Rally will be launched this April and will cover an equally challenging terrain, studded with "special performance" stretches.

The race will set off in Budapest, Hungary April 20 and follow a route via the steppes of eastern Hungary to the Carpathian mountains in Romania and will conclude after an almost 1,900 mile run at Lake Balaton in Western Hungary.

The last special performance leg of the race will take place north of Veszprem at grounds that once were premiere training grounds for the armored divisions of the Warsaw Pact forces.

The race concludes on April 26 at the picturesque lakeside resort of Balatonfüred, 80 miles west of Budapest.

Dakar Series, [www.dakar.com](http://www.dakar.com)

## FOURTH NIGHT FREE SPECIAL AT TWO BUNCH PALMS

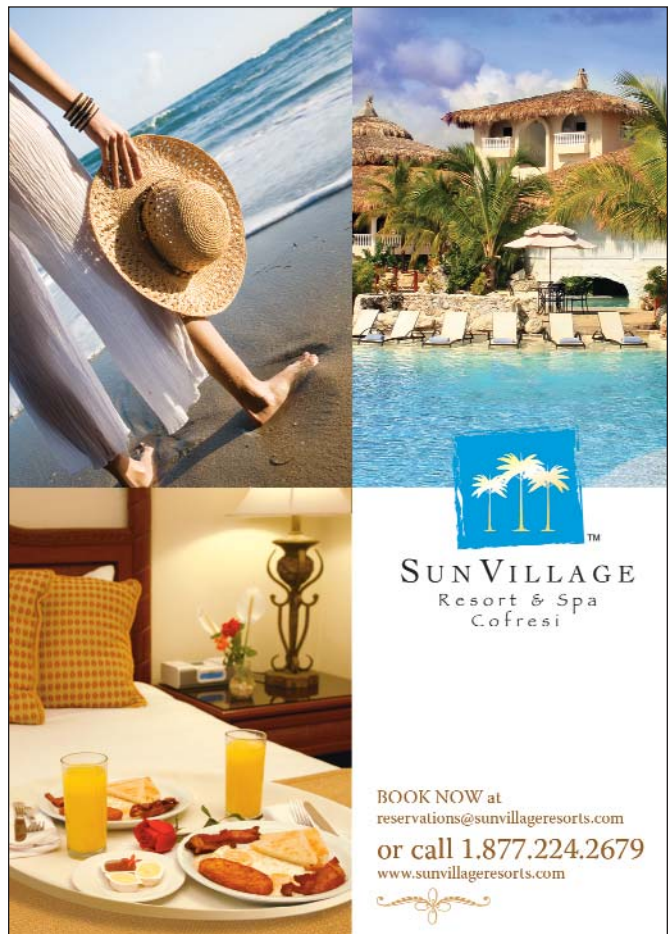
The tranquility of the desert, the healing hot spring waters and the peace and privacy found at Two Bunch Palms Resort & Spa have likened the property to a vortex of sorts – enticing guests to extend both their relaxed state and stay. The Desert Hot Springs, CA resort now makes this easier with its "Stay Three Nights, Receive the Fourth Night Free" special. Available now, this new offering lets guests receive four nights at Two Bunch Palms for the price of three, any time of the week.

At Two Bunch Palms, detaching from the frenetic pace of the outside world is almost effortless. A stark contrast to the overly-scheduled itineraries often found at other resorts, a guest's typical day at Two Bunch is often spent soaking in the hot mineral springs Grotto between soothing spa treatments, reading a book in the sun under a palapa, sitting by the lake listening to the hot spring streams that run throughout the property, or watching wildlife like turtles, rabbits and roadrunners make their way around the grounds.

Guests can also visit with Two Bunch Palms' experienced spa staff to determine which of the over 40 world-class treatments, ranging from Watsu to an Egyptian Clay Body Wrap, or spa packages is best for their individual needs.

Current room rates at Two Bunch Palms start at \$225 per night for a Sunday-Thursday stay; \$275 for a Friday or Saturday stay.

Two Bunch Palms Resort & Spa, 800-472-4334,  
[www.twobunchpalms.com](http://www.twobunchpalms.com)



**SUN VILLAGE**  
Resort & Spa  
Cofresi

BOOK NOW at  
[reservations@sunvillageresorts.com](mailto:reservations@sunvillageresorts.com)  
or call 1.877.224.2679  
[www.sunvillageresorts.com](http://www.sunvillageresorts.com)

## PERRYGOLF JOINS VIRTUOSO NETWORK AS PREFERRED INTERNATIONAL GOLF TRAVEL PROVIDER



PerryGolf has joined Virtuoso as a Preferred Tour Operator providing international golf and luxury lifestyle experiences to the consortium of luxury travel agents who generated more than \$4.2 billion in 2007 sales.

The addition of PerryGolf expands Virtuoso's relationships with the finest travel companies who provide the network's clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. For more than 20 years, PerryGolf has been the luxury tour operator of choice for golf and lifestyle travelers combining their love of the game with their passion for international travel.

PerryGolf offers international golf and luxury lifestyle travel experiences to 12 of the world's most memorable destinations. In addition to Scotland, Ireland, England and Wales, the traditional destinations of international golf travel, PerryGolf has expanded its portfolio in recent years to include Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and China. The company offers customized itineraries as well as escorted programs featuring land tours, small-ship charters and luxury train travel.

PerryGolf co-founder and President Gordon Dalgleish said the alliance with Virtuoso "...comes at an opportune time as more couples are traveling together to enjoy trips that combine golf with distinctive experiences away from the course, including safaris, wine tours, river cruises and cooking classes. The combination of services, destinations and experiences offered through our alliance with Virtuoso is the ideal match for many couples today who want to experience not only great golf, but also the sights and flavors of spectacular travel destinations."

Virtuoso, 866-401-7974, [travel@virtuoso.com](mailto:travel@virtuoso.com);  
PerryGolf, 800-344-5257, [www.perrygolf.com](http://www.perrygolf.com)

## TRIPLE CREEK RANCH INTRODUCES SPRING ROUNDUP WEEKENDS

Travelers can tap their inner cowboy on one of four new Spring Roundup Weekends at Montana's Triple Creek Ranch. The packages are highlighted by a variety of authentic experiences – from cattle branding to barrel racing – that rely on strength, stamina and a keen sense of adventure. Offered May 3 – 7, 11 – 15, 25 – 29 and June 1 – 5, 2008, the four-night packages include all meals,

beverages, house wines and spirits, and on-ranch activities at the luxurious Relais & Châteaux member property. Rates, based on double occupancy, range from \$3,150 for a cedar cabin to \$4,350 for a luxury cabin.

The weekend itinerary kicks off with a welcome reception with Triple Creek Ranch wranglers, followed by three days of hands-on ranch activities. A day learning cowboy basics, including roping, rustling and wrangling, is followed by Branding Day and Rodeo Day, that allows aspiring ranchers to put their riding skills to the test. This 'day on horseback' includes timed events such as barrel racing, pole bending and other rodeo classics. At the end of each day, guests return to the privacy of their cabin to unwind by a fire, enjoy a couple's massage and sip champagne in a hot tub, followed by candlelit dinners in the Lodge's top-rated dining room.

The year-round, all-inclusive resort is designed for adults and offers luxury and tranquility on more than 600 private acres of wooded hillside and open meadows, bordered in three directions by National Forest.

The Montana Rockies add a dramatic backdrop. Accommodations are in 20 Western-styled log cabins with wood-burning fireplaces; most have a private outdoor hot tub.

Triple Creek Ranch, [info@triplecreekranch.com](mailto:info@triplecreekranch.com),  
[www.triplecreekranch.com](http://www.triplecreekranch.com)

## TOM FAZIO DESIGNS GOLF COURSE FOR CHRISTOPHE HARBOUR, ST. KITTS

Christophe Harbour, a luxury resort located on St. Kitts set to debut in 2010, will boast one of the most spectacular championship golf courses in the Caribbean, designed by famed golf course designer, Tom Fazio.

Throughout his 40 years in golf course design, Fazio and his staff of talented designers have created upwards of 200 award-winning courses. No living designer has more credits on *Golf Digest's* list of America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses and *Golfweek's* collection of America's Best. Now, he brings his experience and talent to Christophe Harbour along with the Kiawah Development Partner's team, with whom he designed the highly-acclaimed River Course at the Kiawah Island Club.

Though Fazio has designed courses for every level of play, his philosophy for the golf course at Christophe Harbour is "not to make the course difficult, but intriguing to players of every level." Fazio's team will strive to create harmonious transitions from existing topographical conditions, while developing a course that offers golfers of varying skill a challenging yet enjoyable experience. He has planned the course to start high and finish low, with elevation changes between the holes.

Fazio's team is also working meticulously to ensure the course is environmentally friendly and will enhance the idyllic natural surroundings. Upon excavation, Fazio and his team will take a number of steps to curb erosion and sustain the environment, in addition to protecting the nearby terrain by filtering water efficiently within the golf course – guaranteeing that the course is both environmentally friendly and a truly spectacular "must play" green.

Christophe Harbour, [www.christopheharbour.com](http://www.christopheharbour.com)

## TERME DI SATURNIA ANNOUNCES OPENING OF CHAMPIONSHIP COURSE



Located in the heart of Tuscany's Maremma region, Terme di Saturnia Spa & Golf Resort has long served as a luxury spa destination and will now provide its guests with golf as it announces the opening of the first nine holes of its championship golf course. This course, which will open to the general public in spring 2008, will further advance the Terme di Saturnia philosophy of overall well-being of the mind and body.

When the second nine holes open in March 2008, both guests and non-resort guests will be able to play the course. Daily greens fees for hotel guests will be approximately \$73 and approximately \$88 for non-resort guests on weekdays and approximately \$117 for non-resort guests during weekends and holidays. In addition, the course will also offer half-hour private lessons with a golf trainer. Set upon 247 acres adjacent to the resort, each of the nine holes was expertly designed by internationally renowned architect Ronald Fream.

Terme di Saturnia Spa & Golf Resort features 140 guestrooms, including 65 junior suites, three suites and two grand suites, state-of-the-art spa, two restaurants, a conference center, pools, a replica of a traditional Roman bath house, fitness center, tennis court, practice green, a Cruciani shop, Art Gallery, and the Spa Boutique at Terme di Saturnia.

A true medical spa with a staff of 45 therapists and five medical doctors, the spa features therapies for beauty, stress management and thermal and hydrotherapy treatments based on the area's unique thermal waters which date back to the Etruscan period.

Daily and weekly rates include the use of the resort's thermal pools, Roman Bath, and thermal water falls. The rates also include a guided morning hike, use of the gym, and a reserved deck chair and sun umbrella in the pool's park.

2008 daily rates start at approximately \$292 (double) and \$372 (single). Weekly Rates start at approximately \$1,339 (double) and \$1,901 (single). All rates are per person with bed & breakfast accommodation.

Terme di Saturnia, [www.termedisaturnia.com](http://www.termedisaturnia.com)

## JUNCTION CITY, KS TO BE SITE OF BASS FEDERATION NATION CHAMPIONSHIP

The Kansas Department of Commerce, Travel and Tourism Division have announced the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS) will hold its 2008 Federation Nation Championship at Milford Lake in Junction City, Kansas on November 6 – 8, 2008.

The three-day event will showcase amateur bass fishers from around the United States and the world, including Zimbabwe, South Africa, Japan, Italy, Canada and Mexico. The top finishers from each of six geographic regions will go on to compete in the Bassmaster Classic. The event will also include the Bassmaster Casting Kids Semifinals and Federation Nation Presidents Conference. Television coverage of the event will be featured on ESPN2. Milford Lake, a 16,000-acre reservoir in north-central Kansas, is known as the "Fishing Capitol of Kansas," where anglers can find largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass. Milford Lake has played host to other national fishing events in the past, including the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail Championship in 2006 and the Cabela's King Kat Championship earlier this year. BASS is the worldwide authority on bass fishing, sanctioning more than 20,000 events annually through the BASS Federation Nation. Guided by its mission to serve all fishing fans, BASS sets the standard for credibility, professionalism, sportsmanship and conservation.

Kansas Department of Commerce, Travel & Tourism Division,  
[www.TravelKS.com](http://www.TravelKS.com); Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS),  
[www.bassmaster.com](http://www.bassmaster.com)

## NEW VINO THERAPY SPA TREATMENTS OFFERED AT SHERATON WILD HORSE PASS RESORT & SPA

Aji Spa at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort has partnered with Italian Vineyard Tauleto to launch their one-of-a-kind Vinotherapy spa and body product line offering multiple spa treatments utilizing the wine-based product. Developed from the extracts of the wine making process in the vineyards of the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, the Sangiovese-scented Tauleto Vinotherapy products boast the same anti-aging and anti-oxidant elements for the external body as drinking red wine has proven for internal benefits. Perfect for both wine and spa aficionados, these treatments combine the health benefits of red wine with the relaxation of the spa experience along with an alluring scent.

The individual massage, wrap and scrubs are 50-minutes and \$155 while the VINO Pedicure, which includes a glass of red wine while guest's feet are scrubbed and soaked in the burgundy bath is 50-minutes and \$90. The combination Scrub, Wrap and Massage, which utilizes all of the wine-based products to benefit the body by exfoliating, detoxifying, firming/toning, purifying, improving circulation and much more, lasts 110-minutes for \$290.

Full use of the spa facility is included with the purchase of any treatment and reservations are recommended at least one week in advance for preferred times and menu selections.

The Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort & Spa,  
[WildHorsePassResort.com](http://WildHorsePassResort.com)

## SANDOS PLAYACAR BEACH RESORT & SPA NAMED 'BEST FOR FAMILIES'; ENJOY SAVINGS ON FAMILY FUN

For the second consecutive year, Sandos Playacar Beach Resort & Spa on the Riviera Maya, Mexico, has garnered a spot on the TripAdvisor 'Top 10 Best for Families' hotels list in the Caribbean and Latin America category. In addition, the all-inclusive resort recently re-opened after a three-month long renovation and remodeling project which included room upgrades and new entertainment facilities.

"We are pleased to be the recipient of such a prestigious award based on votes from millions of travelers from across the world," said Jacques DePaep, Director of Sales and Marketing for Sandos Hotels & Resorts. "Our exceptional staff, detailed activity programs and re-styled property combine to create the ultimate vacation experience for guests."

Sandos Playacar features 460 spacious accommodations, arranged in several three- to four-story buildings that surround the main swimming pool area. Rooms are available in four categories – standard, Hacienda junior suites, sea-facing suites, and Sandos VIP Royal Club accommodations.

The recently-completed renovation and remodeling project included a total overhaul of soft furnishings, ceilings, sliding doors and bathroom fittings in all guest rooms; a new on-site Italian restaurant; new coffee bar, theater, sports bar and an additional bar; newly-designed VIP Royal Club rooms; and a general "spruce up" of all property features.

Vacationing families are afforded increased savings as one child under the age of 12 stays, eats and plays free, and a second child (under the age of 12) receives a 50 percent discount (for kids staying in the same accommodations as paying parents/adults).

Sandos provides complimentary enrollment in the Sandos Kids Club, allowing parents the opportunity to steal some private moments alone while their children make new friends during supervised, age-specific activities.

"Intent on catering to specific age brackets, instead of grouping all children together, each Sandos property features an exciting activity program crafted to meet the needs of each age group," said Mr. De Paep.

Club programs include a Baby Club (ages 2 – 3), a Mini-Club (ages 4 – 7), a Kids Club (ages 8 – 12), and a Teen Club (ages 13 – 17). In addition there are pool and beachside activities for families including a variety of sporting events and friendly competitions that guests of all ages can participate in – each ideal for capturing magical vacation memories sure to last a lifetime.

All-inclusive hotel rates begin at \$105 per person, per night based on double occupancy.

An all-inclusive Sandos Hotels vacation features all meals and beverages, sporting activities, use of exercise equipment, daily activities program, supervised Kids Club, nightly entertainment, and all hotel taxes and service charges. Additional activities can be arranged.

Sandos Hotels & Resorts, 866-887-5601,  
[www.sandoshotels.com](http://www.sandoshotels.com)

## SPA RENEWAL PROGRAM AT CEIBA DEL MAR BEACH & SPA RESORT

At Ceiba del Mar Beach & Spa Resort guests can experience a unique escape designed to rejuvenate both mind and body: the Spa Renewal Program. From personalized spa treatments to the resort's private meditation palapa, Ceiba del Mar offers the ultimate opportunity to revitalize the spirit and handle the stresses that life's changes can bring about.

When booking the Ceiba del Mar Spa Renewal Program, everything needed to experience the ultimate relaxing getaway is provided, including seven nights accommodations (various room categories available); welcome cocktail upon arrival; fresh fruit basket in room/suite; in-room complimentary continental breakfast daily; six spa treatments per person, per stay; spa gift and one bath robe per person; access to gym, bicycles, kayaks and snorkel equipment; access to Temazcal Ceremony and meditation palapa; fitness program daily (Yoga, Pilates, Aquafit); and lodging 12 percent tax and five percent service (spa gratuities not included). This escape is available now, for bookings through June 30, 2008. Prices vary according to lodging selected and length of stay and range from \$3,807 - 10,152 for suites that accommodate three guests.

Ceiba del Mar Beach & Spa Resort was created by architect Luis Segura. The hotel originally opened in 2001, and was later fully renovated after Hurricane Wilma. This exclusive resort features 88 units, including 37 suites and seven penthouses, all with ocean view. The unique holistic spa, two restaurants, the Terrace Lounge and two bars compliment the resort.

Ceiba del Mar Beach & Spa Resort, [www.ceibadelmar.com](http://www.ceibadelmar.com)

## CONDOMINIUM CONNECTION REPORTS ON TRAVEL MARKET IN HAWAII

Condominium Connection, one of Hawaii's top producers of condominium and hotel travel packages, has developed a new marketing report that will take a fresh view of the complex Hawaii travel market and report some consumer trends that may help stimulate tourism sales in slower periods.

The Condominium Connection Future Booking Trends (CCFBT) will be published each quarter of the year and will highlight trends from actual hotel and condominium package sales throughout the Islands. The report will monitor and analyze market share by island, average daily rate (ADR), value trend (moderate to upscale properties), inventory changes, and areas of marketing opportunity.

In announcing the new communication, Joseph Fienberg, Condominium Connection President, says, "We monitor all properties—condos and hotels—throughout the Islands in real time. We can see trends as quickly as they develop and we can project future sales based on advance booking patterns. We know what's driving the market and how each property is performing from consumer perspectives."

Maui still generates about 47 percent of the sales, followed by Oahu at 38 percent, Kauai with eight percent, and Big Island at seven percent.

Condominium Connection, 800-423-2976,  
[www.condoconnection.com](http://www.condoconnection.com)

## BRANDED MERCHANDISE NOW FOR SALE AT DEMA'S ONLINE STORE

Items from the DEMA store, from t-shirts to backpacks featuring the dynamic new "Be A Diver" logo are back in stock. Having sold out the entire inventory from the DEMA Show store, DEMA has responded to members' demand for these items by making them available once again. DEMA members can purchase them now in the online DEMA store at [www.dema.org](http://www.dema.org). Available in quantities of 12 or more, merchandise includes backpacks, beach towels, hats, board shorts, camp shirts, sweatshirts, long sleeve button down shirts, polo shirts, pullover hooded sweatshirts, and t-shirts.

According to Tom Ingram, Executive Director of DEMA, "The availability of 'Be A Diver' merchandise is important because it helps the DEMA member tie together their own marketing efforts with DEMA's national 'Be A Diver' promotional and advertising campaign. Doing so helps extend the limited promotional dollars available to most individual businesses, and acts as a 'multiplier' to reach a wider audience of potential customers. The fact that inventory from the DEMA Show store sold out quickly is evidence that the merchandise is popular among diving professionals."

DEMA, the Diving Equipment & Marketing Association, is an international organization dedicated to the promotion and growth of the recreational scuba diving and snorkeling industry. With more than 1,600 members, this non-profit, global organization promotes scuba diving through many initiatives including consumer awareness programs, media campaigns and sponsorship of the DEMA Show, a trade event open only to companies doing business in the

scuba diving, action water sports and adventure/dive travel industries. DEMA Show 2008 will take place October 22-25, 2008 in Las Vegas, NV.

DEMA, 858-616-6408, [www.dema.org](http://www.dema.org), [www.demashow.com](http://www.demashow.com)

## PARTNERS IN PARADISE: THE DIVING ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME AT SUNSET HOUSE

Partners in Paradise 2008 is an inaugural event for Scuba Schools International (SSI) which will take place July 19-26, 2008 at the Sunset House, Grand Cayman.

It will be a fun-filled week of diving activities, contests, events, food, fun and sun. Enjoy the ultimate diving vacation in paradise with other SSI Divers.

All packages include: seven nights accommodations at the luxurious Sunset House Resort; welcome cocktail party; six complimentary breakfasts; unlimited shore dives; six days of two-tank boat diving; seaside barbeque; recognition party; photo contest; and other contests and prizes. Packages start at \$1,540; airfare not included. Sunset House – designed by divers for divers – is located just south of Georgetown and Seven Mile Beach.

This dedicated diver's resort is situated on the water's edge with excellent off-shore diving. Sunset House offers the ultimate amenities including comfortable accommodations, casual dining at the SeaHarvest restaurant, nightlife at My Bar, custom boats, Nitrox, and Cathy Church's Underwater Photo Center.

Sunset House, 800-854-4767, [www.sunsethouse.com](http://www.sunsethouse.com)

## BOHIO DIVE RESORT – TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS



Located on award winning Pillory Beach, this intimate resort guarantees a personal service in idyllic Caribbean surroundings. Offering a variety of water sports including diving, shorkeling, deep sea fishing, sting ray encounters, whale watching, sailing & kayaking. Lasting memorable experiences for divers of all levels from novice to expert. PADI courses and Nitrox available

**Bohio Dive Resort**  
Grand Turk  
Turks & Caicos Islands, BWI  
For more information:  
[www.bohioresort.com](http://www.bohioresort.com)  
Tel: +1 649 946 2135

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[www.sunbreeze.net](http://www.sunbreeze.net)  
toll free: 1-800-688-0191



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[www.sunbreesesuites.com](http://www.sunbreesesuites.com)  
toll free: 1-800-826-1631

## SPECIAL FREE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH OFFER FROM BOHIO DIVE RESORT

The Bohio Dive Resort, situated on Pillory Beach, is offering a special offer: book a seven-night holiday before the end of April 2008 and breakfast and lunch are complimentary at the Bohio's famous Guanahani Restaurant & Bar.

Now in its third season, divers are returning each year to this intimate resort on the island of Grand Turk. This idyllic spot, part of a protected marine park, was awarded best diving beach by Men's Journal.

Conditions are perfect for beginners and advanced divers alike. "I've seen eagle rays and sting rays, schools of squid and lots of juvenile fish, including my favorite, the juvenile spotted drum, just snorkeling off our beach," says owner Kelly Shanahan. Grand Turk's "breath-taking wall" is listed among the top 10 advanced dive sites in the world. The dramatic plunge from shallow reefs to ocean trench a mile deep, with chutes and tunnels to explore, attracts a wealth of wildlife. Witness the rare black corals at Black Forest dive site, or the teeming fish

life at Amphitheatre.

Bohio is Grand Turk's only dedicated dive resort and the ecologically minded team boasts both international and local expertise, offering a wide selection of PADI courses, Nitrox, and the latest dive equipment. The resort's dive boat will arrive at remote dive sites in five minutes, or just stroll in off the beach. Perfect for snorkelers, swimmers or those just starting out is Bohio's unique location with their natural sandy pool and shallow house reef.

When not diving, there are Hobie cats, kayaks and bicycles to hire, and lessons or guided trips available. From January through April, take a whale-watching tour, when Grand Turk welcomes migrating Humpback whales.

The resort has 16 rooms which were refurbished in August, four of them suites with kitchenettes and king-size beds, all just steps from the ocean.

**Bohio Dive Resort, [info@bohioresort.com](mailto:info@bohioresort.com), [www.bohioresort.com](http://www.bohioresort.com)**

## DIVE SPECIALS FROM \$729 AT SUNBREEZE HOTEL IN BELIZE

San Pedro, Ambergris Caye in Belize is a magnificent island community situated in the Western Caribbean Sea, less than a half mile from the world's second largest barrier reef, renowned to world class divers.

SunBreeze Suites and SunBreeze Hotel are sister island properties located on the beach in the heart of San Pedro Town, within walking distance to many of the finest restaurants in all of Belize, fully-stocked supermarkets, and shops filled with everything from a trinket to a treasure.

Their PADI Resort Dive operator 'Aqua Dives Belize' with qualified and experienced guides, dive instructors, dive masters, boat captains and quality equipment, are able to provide personalized service to all FITS and groups visiting all local and offshore dive sites. Based on the response they have been getting from satisfied customers, they are offering the best unBelizeable Dive Special yet. Enjoy seven nights accommodation including room taxes, four days local two tank boat dives, a night dive and round trip local air transfers from \$729 per diver (August -

October) or from \$829 per diver April 16 to August 2008.

With flights departing from Miami, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Charlotte, Newark and Los Angeles it's never been easier to take the short hop to Belize. Major airlines serving Belize are American Airlines, Continental, Delta, U.S. Airways and TACA.

Upon arrival at the Philip Goldson International Airport, guests can take a short 15 minute flight to San Pedro on one of their commuter airlines or enjoy a ride on the Caribbean on one of the regularly scheduled water taxis.

**SunBreeze Hotel, 800-820-1631, 800-688-0191, [www.sunbreeze.net](http://www.sunbreeze.net)**

## SPECTACULAR DIVING AT BLUE MARLIN LODGE

The Blue Marlin Lodge offers vacation/snorkeling packages, deep sea trolling, fly-fishing, and diving. The lodge features nine island guestrooms, three dome shape cabins, and five private beach cabanas overlooking the Barrier Reef.

Belize offers some of the world's best diving. As an official PADI Dive Center, Blue Marlin Lodge offers its guests the best diving variety along with the best in dive service and equipment. Blue Marlin's experienced staff is always prepared allowing guests more leisure time before, during and after dives. Morning and afternoon single tank boat trips are the normal daily offering. One or two night dives are available each week. Trips to the reef sites average five to 25 minutes. The diving is quite spectacular, with walls, marine life and visibility being the highlights of nearly every dive. The types of fish that can be seen on any one dive include spotted eagle rays, moray eels, dolphins, rock snappers, and smaller species of fish. Snorkeling is as spectacular for the diver and non-diver alike. The lagoon and forereef habitats have healthy coral reefs. Even those that do not swim well will find plenty of shallow, protected reefs. Blue Marlin Divers is a PADI Dive Center, complete with rental equipment and a menu of instruction and specialty courses **Blue Marlin Lodge, 800-798-1558, [reservations@bluemarlinlodge.com](mailto:reservations@bluemarlinlodge.com), [www.bluemarlinlodge.com](http://www.bluemarlinlodge.com)**



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(800) 854-4767

## COZUMEL'S HOTEL FLAMINGO COMPLETES UPGRADES



COURTESY OF FLAMINGO HOTEL

The newly remodeled Hotel Flamingo in Cozumel has made its move into the specialty boutique hotel market with several upgrades and services designed to make a guests stay more comfortable. Designed in the colonial style of Old Mexico, guests feel at home relaxing in the charming courtyard setting or sunning on the ocean view sundeck.

Each of the 22 rooms at the Flamingo features air conditioning, ceiling fans, cable TV and phone. The newly remodeled Superior rooms now offer upgraded bathrooms, tropical hardwood furniture, mini split AC units, guest robes, expanded balconies, and digital in room safes capable of holding a laptop computer.

The penthouse offers two bedrooms, oversize living room, full kitchen and a large ocean view sundeck. Romantic getaway packages are available for all rooms including options for in room massage, Champagne, fresh flowers, private dining, and more.

The bar area of Aqua Bar & Grill has been completely remodeled with a new hardwood bar and now offers al fresco dining in the newly expanded sidewalk café area.

Centrally located two blocks from the town square and near the waterfront, the Flamingo is convenient to all that Cozumel offers, including excellent shopping, dining, and entertainment.

The English-speaking front desk staff can make a vacation unique with insider's suggestions for restaurants, quiet beaches, water sports, scuba diving, snorkeling, and Mayan ruins.

Through April 13, 2008, the newly remolded Superior rooms are being offered at \$93 per room per night for double occupancy. A full breakfast option is also available to guests for \$7.95. Tip is included and room service is complimentary. Starbucks coffee is served.

Certified scuba divers can add on two-tank boat dives for \$69 pp per day, including buffet lunch, tanks, weight, belts and transfers to/from the dive boat.

Hotel Flamingo, 800-806-1601, flamingo@diveres.com, www.hotelflamingo.com

## DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP IN PALAU WITH SAM'S TOURS

Sam's Tours, a PADI National Geographic Center and Palau's premier dive and Eco Tour Company, has recently launched their new Digital Photography Center catering to digital photographers of all interest levels. The Digital Photo Center is fully equipped with top of the line Apple iMac workstations completely optimized for digital imaging. No other photo center in Palau comes near. Internationally acclaimed professional photographer and Apple Certified Trainer, Mr. Gunther Deichmann designed Sam's Tours Digital Photo Center and trained the staff to cater to the highest demands of today's digital photographers.

In October 2008, internationally acclaimed professional photographers Gunther Deichmann and Tony Wu, in conjunction with Sam's Tours, will conduct a week long Digital Photography Workshop at the world class Palau Pacific Resort with Mandara Spa, in Palau, Micronesia. The program will include photography field trips to Palau's stunning topside attractions and world class reefs with Sam's Tours.

The workshop is open to scuba divers and non-scuba divers alike and customized itineraries and a selection of activities are available for accompanying spouses or partners who are not participating in the workshop.

Sam's Tours, reservationsdesk@samstours.com, www.samstours.com; Palau Visitors Authority, www.visit-palau.com

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## TAUCK EXECUTIVES VISIT NETHERLANDS TO CHECK PROGRESS ON *MS SWISS SAPPHIRE*



Executives from Tauck World Discovery recently visited Hardinxveld Giessendam in the Netherlands where its new luxury riverboat, the *MS Swiss Sapphire*, is being outfitted. Production of the ship is actually ahead of schedule, according to Andre Reitsma, who is overseeing the *Sapphire's* construction. Launching in early 2008, the *Swiss Sapphire* will be featured on six Tauck river cruise itineraries.

Pictured, left to right are: Tauck CEO Dan Mahar, Reitsma, Tauck COO Dietmar Wertanzl, and Phil Crosby, Tauck's Vice President, Finance.

Tauck World Discovery, [www.tauck.com](http://www.tauck.com)

## SONESTA NILE GODDESS RELAUNCHED AFTER EXTENSIVE RENOVATION

The *Sonesta Nile Goddess* will be relaunched in February after extensive renovation. Originally launched in 1989 as Sonesta's first ship in the collection, the *Sonesta Nile Goddess* has been completely renovated including all cabins, suites, restaurants and public spaces.

The ship features 49 standard cabins, four extravagant suites with private terrace and four junior suites. The five deck ship was awarded the certificate of Excellence from the American Bureau of shipping (A.B.S.) and classified as A 1 river service. All cabins feature wide panoramic windows to view the Nile and passing antiquities. Cabin amenities include private direct-dial telephones, hairdryers, safety deposit boxes mini bar, music, individual climate control, wireless Internet access, plasma televisions and movies. Bathrooms are equipped with full-size bathtubs.

Ship amenities include several restaurants and lounges, in-room dining available until midnight, panoramic elevator, purified water, outdoor BBQ, international telephone line and wireless internet access, jogging track, outdoor swimming

pool, spa and fully equipped gym.

The ships also offer evening entertainment beginning with captain's welcome cocktail party, oriental black tie "Galabeya" party, Nubian folkloric show and themed nights throughout your cruise.

Daily guided excursions visiting historic sites of mysterious ancient Egypt include the Temple of Philaie, Komombo, Hatshepsut, Colossi of Memnon, Karnak and Luxor temples. In Aswan guests may also enjoy a felucca journey around Kitchener's Island and the Agha Khan Mausoleum. Sonesta's fleet of Nile River cruise ships offer three-, four-, six- and seven-night trips between Aswan and Luxor.

Sonesta, 800-Sonesta (800-766-3782), [sonesta.com](http://sonesta.com)

## WORLD'S GREATEST OPERA HOUSES BY PRIVATE JET FROM JQ PORTER EXQUISITE TRAVEL

Great Performances Tours is the first-ever private jet tours of the world's great opera houses. From Paris and Milan to Prague, Beijing, Sydney and more, jet setters will catch the brightest stars of the opera, ballet and symphony while enjoying fine dining and hotel accommodations, insider access, and more at a starting rate of \$65,000 per person.

On May 27, 2008, 10 travelers will board a G-5 for an all-inclusive, 13-day Great Performances Tour starring opera's "It Girl" Anna Netrebko.

This one-of-a-kind package, with a starting rate of \$85,000 per person, includes word-class performances in the top theatres of Paris, St. Petersburg, Prague and Vienna; gala seats and dinner at the highly-coveted Paris Opera's May Gala starring Anna Netrebko; dream line-up of classical greats such as Renee Fleming, Riccardo Muti, Valery Gergiev, Gustavo Dudamel and the Vienna Philharmonic; St. Petersburg's White Nights Festival to see the Kirov Ballet and opera's biggest stars; deluxe accommodations at the world's finest properties, match-made to each traveler's preferences; Michelin-starred dining; world-class European guides; luxury transport with luggage handlers; private jet service on a Gulfstream 550; and all taxes and gratuities.

Additional highlights include private entry to the Hermitage Museum; rehearsal visits to the St. Petersburg Philharmonic and Kirov Ballet; master class with a Czech opera star; professional art, fashion and antique shopping; couturier appointment at Chanel, Paris; French wine tasting in a private Parisian residence; Royal Box seating for the Lipizzaner Horses, Vienna; and free time daily for spa and salon appointments, shopping and strolling.

"My goal was to create a one-of-a-kind tour experience for a new century...a dazzling odyssey of culture and exclusive access," Jacqueline Porter says. "Whether a client is joining a handful of like-minded travelers on an uber-exclusive programmed tour, or creating a customized odyssey lasting a week or a year, we'll develop it at any level of demand – on our jets or yours."

Great Performances Tours depart yearlong with varying itineraries, performances and pricing.

JQ Porter Exquisite Travel, 877-JQP8989, [www.JQPorter.com](http://www.JQPorter.com)

## TRAVEL DYNAMICS INTERNATIONAL ACQUIRES CLELIA II



Cultural and expedition cruise company Travel Dynamics International has announced the acquisition of the small ship *Clelia II*. Built in Italy in 1990 as the *Renaissance IV*, the ship has been since 1995 the private yacht of a prominent ship-owning family.

*Clelia II*, which has 50 suites for 100 guests, will join Travel Dynamics International's fleet in the spring of 2009, following a comprehensive refurbishment, redecoration and other works, including upgrading the ship's hull to ice-class for cruises in Antarctica and the Arctic.

"Given the growing demand for small-ship cruising, we are especially excited to be adding another high-quality cruise ship to our fleet," said George Papagapitos, President of Travel Dynamics International. "*Clelia II* offers elegant all-suite accommodations, spacious public areas, expansive open decks and a state-of-the-art spa. The addition of this ship to our fleet will allow us to expand our signature cultural and expedition cruises in the Western Hemisphere."

During summer and early fall, *Clelia II* will operate in the Great Lakes, performing seven-day cruises between Toronto and Duluth, Minnesota. Later in the fall, the ship will cruise in Canada's Maritime Provinces and the Atlantic Coast, followed by cruises along South America's East

coast. From November to February, *Clelia II* will explore Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands.

*Clelia II* complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology, as well as with retractable fin stabilizers for smooth sailing.

The ship will also be outfitted with a fleet of Zodiac inflatable craft and kayaks, and will be manned by 65 European officers and crew.

Travel Dynamics International currently operates the *Corinthian II* and *Callisto*.

Travel Dynamics International,  
800-257-5767,  
www.traveldynamicsinternational.com

## 2007 A BANNER YEAR FOR NCMA

With growth from 11 to 15 member lines, the incorporation of a new Certified Niche Cruise Agent designation that attracted 250 agents to its online training system, and training of more than 1,200 new niche cruise specialists, the Niche Cruise Marketing Alliance experienced a banner year in 2007.

Louis Cruise Lines, Pandaw Cruises, American Canadian Caribbean Line, Variety Cruises, and Elegant Cruises and Tours all became NCMA members in 2007, joining the 11 existing NCMA member lines and further adding to the diversity of cruise offerings available through NCMA.

In addition, NCMA participated in six trade shows during the year: the Home-Based Travel Agent Show in Charlotte, N.C.; Cruise-A-Thon in Seattle; the Home-Based Travel Agent Show in Atlantic City; the Leisure Travel Show in Fort Lauderdale; and the Home-Based Travel Agent and Luxury Travel Expo in Las Vegas.

The 15 NCMA member lines have banded together to educate travel agents on the value of concentrating on the sale of specialty cruise products. The alliance provides educational programs, seminar content and trade show exposure for its members and this industry segment. In addition, its award winning website allows consumers to locate Niche Cruise Specialist travel agents

by postal code, name or city.

"As successful as 2007 was, we are looking forward to an even more exciting year in 2008," said NCMA Executive Director Larry Dessler. "We hope to introduce a new 'Open House' training program for agents that will be scheduled independently of trade shows and provide an extended program for agents who would receive their Certified Niche Cruise Specialist designation upon graduation from the training."

The organization will participate in eight trade shows in 2008 and also update its sales manual binder. Dessler said NCMA's goals are to interact with at least 10,000 travel agents and add 500 new Niche Cruise Specialists in 2008.

Other NCMA member lines include American Cruise Lines, Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, Galapagos Explorer II/Canodros, Hurtigruten, Imperial River Cruises, Orion Expedition Cruises, Peter Deilmann Cruises, RiverBarge Excursion Line, Star Clippers and Voyages of Discovery.

Niche Cruise Marketing Alliance,  
NicheCruise@msn.com,  
www.nichecruise.com

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## NEW VACATION PACKAGES FROM THE ALASKA RAILROAD



RON NIERHOFF/COURTESY ALASKA RAILROAD

The Alaska Railroad has new vacation package options for the adventure traveler. Itineraries include scenic rail travel and other transportation links to unique experiences that are “off the beaten path.”

New packages are now available such as the “Kenai Deluxe Adventure” and “Alaska Fishing Sampler” featuring plenty of fishing options for the fishing enthusiasts which can easily be customized for the travel partner who may not want to go fishing.

The “Alaska Indulgence” 12-day/12-night package spans from the Arctic Circle to the seaport town of Seward, the gateway to Kenai Fjords National Park. Along the way guests will 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. With accommodations, gourmet dining, and helicopter accessed guided fishing and hiking options, the Alaska Railroad can help plan the vacation of a lifetime.

The Alaska Railroad, 800-544-0552, [AlaskaRailroad.com](http://AlaskaRailroad.com)

## RAILS TO TRAILS PACKAGE TO MESA VERDE NATIONAL PARK

Mesa Verde National Park is a historical wonder and one of the most well preserved archeological sites in the world. To prepare for another season at the park and entice travelers to visit Mesa Verde in 2008, ARAMARK, the official concessioner of the park, is offering the “Rails to Trails” package that provides visitors a taste of everything Mesa Verde has to offer, and a taste of the local culture in quaint Durango, Colorado, just an hour away from the park.

For \$599 per couple, a savings of more than 20 percent, the Rails to Trails package, available from mid-April to mid-October, includes a one-night stay, including breakfast for two in historic Durango at the top-ranked Hampton Inn; two seats on the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad for a scenic trip to Mesa Verde; two nights inside Mesa Verde National Park at the Far View Lodge, including continental breakfast each morning; and a half

day ranger-guided tour of Mesa Verde’s cliff dwellings and archeological sites. Following the guest’s departure, a 10 percent commission is paid on full package price, excluding taxes and surcharges.

Together, Mesa Verde and Durango offer not only stunning natural scenery and fun outdoor activities, but also Western culture, Native American art and the wondrous cliff dwellings of the Anasazi. The combination makes for a perfect slice of the Four Corners region.

Durango’s airport is serviced by a number of major airlines making it easily accessible via gateway cities such as Denver and Phoenix.

Because the city is 50 miles from the entrance to Mesa Verde National Park, it’s easy to combine a trip to both places in a weekend destination.

Mesa Verde National Park, [www.visitmesaverde.com](http://www.visitmesaverde.com)

## ZIMBALI LODGE AND THE BLUE TRAIN OFFER LUXURY GOLFER’S GETAWAY

Sun International’s spectacular Zimbali Lodge located on the Indian Ocean, has teamed up with the greatest luxury train on the African continent, the Blue Train, to offer travelers a spectacular experience that includes white glove service along with some of the most beautiful golf greens in South Africa.

The package features roundtrip overnight passage on the world-famous Blue Train from Pretoria to Zimbali Lodge and back. On the train all meals, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are included while guests soak in the scenery of South Africa. After guests disembark, they will enjoy two nights accommodation at luxurious Zimbali Lodge, including breakfast, Braai (barbecue) dinner on Saturday night, and Sunday buffet lunch. While at Zimbali, they will be treated to two rounds of golf at Zimbali Golf Estate (including green fees and cart hire) or a voucher to use at Camelot Spa at Zimbali. Rates and day-by-day itinerary are available on request.

Zimbali Lodge is operated by Sun International Hotels & Resorts, Africa’s largest tourism and leisure group. Sun International’s The Table Bay Hotel in Cape Town, The Palace of the Lost City and Sun City Hotel, all in South Africa, as well as The Royal Livingstone in Zambia, were named to the Condé Nast Traveler’s 2007 Gold List of the World’s Best Hotels.

The Blue Train is one of the world’s premier rail experiences whose name has become synonymous with the ultimate in luxury and personal service. The Blue Train offers chartered and scheduled routes through some of the most breathtaking scenery that southern Africa has to offer, each journey complete with gourmet five-star meals, a beautiful selection of international wines and premium liquors, and signature private butler service for every suite.

Package dates are September 11 – 14 and November 13 – 17, 2008. Prices for a De Luxe Suite on The Blue Train are approximately \$1,160 per person sharing, and approximately \$1,742 single. Prices for a Luxury Suite on The Blue Train are approximately \$1,224 per person sharing or approximately \$1,839 single.

Sun International Hotels & Resorts, [www.suninternational.com](http://www.suninternational.com);

The Blue Train, [www.bluetrain.co.za](http://www.bluetrain.co.za)

## THE ROMANCE OF RAIL TRAVEL BY GOWAY



Goway Travel encourages travelers to experience the romance of rail travel through legendary and unique journeys throughout a range of exotic destinations. The selection of journeys include the longest rail journey in the world, a journey aboard an Orient-Express train, and one of the world renowned trains which journeys through Southern Africa.

"Goway offers a wide range of travel experiences throughout the South Pacific, Asia and Africa, and rail travel is truly an exceptional experience," commented Emma Cottis, Product and Marketing Manager of Goway Travel.

In fact, many of the rail journeys are built into some of Goway's most popular travel itineraries. In Australia, Goway's "Holiday of a Lifetime" the Waltzing Matilda, includes an optional journey between Alice Springs and Adelaide aboard the Ghan. The ultimate journey through the heart of the continent is also available connecting right through to Darwin. Travelers can enjoy two nights and marvel at the Australian landscapes.

In Asia, the Eastern & Oriental Express journey is more than just a connection between cities, including excursions to destinations such as the River Kwai; it is a subtle balance of Eastern culture and cuisine and Western comforts whilst traveling in style and experiencing the many and mystical wonders of Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.

With interiors created by a leading interior architectural design company, The Blue Train rivals many a five-star hotel in terms of elegance, grace, comfort and style. This Southern African travel experience offers journeys throughout South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and can be customized into any journey planned by Goway's AfricaExperts.

Goway Travel, [www.Goway.com](http://www.Goway.com)

## TRAVEL ON THE LUXURIOUS HIRAM BINGHAM TRAIN WITH LIMA TOURS

NBC has drawn up a list of the "World's 10 Most Marvelous Journeys by Rail" and "Hiram Bingham" the luxurious train on the route to Machu Picchu, is ranked in seventh place, giving Cusco and Peru another reason to be proud. Peru's geography is extensive and varied: in a few hours one can see the sparse vegetation of the high plateau change into exuberant jungle. Seeing how the scenery changes from the windows of a train is a delightful experience.

Lima Tours has been pleased to offer this luxury service to its clients since 2003, and thanks to ongoing support they are in first place for Hiram Bingham sales for the fourth year running.

Lima Tours, [inbound@limatours.com.pe](mailto:inbound@limatours.com.pe), [www.limatours.com.pe](http://www.limatours.com.pe)

## SCANDINAVIAN RAIL PASS BROUGHT UNDER EURAIL UMBRELLA

The Eurail Group is giving more options to travelers wanting to explore the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Scandinavia has long been a popular tourist destination for overseas visitors with numbers increasing steadily; in 2006 there were over 700,000 visitors from the United States alone. Now through a new selection of offerings, Eurail passengers can travel throughout the region's rail systems using just a single pass.

On January 1, Eurail introduced the Eurail Scandinavia Pass to its vast array of rail packages (replacing the former ScanRail Pass). The pass enables unlimited 2nd class rail travel in all four participating countries and is available throughout a range of validity periods. Discounts are offered to groups of two or more and to young people under the age of 26. Prices start from 50 euros a day for a four-day Saver Pass. Eurail's global network of sales agents makes the pass widely available around the world, and assists travelers in purchasing packages prior to their departure to Europe. Therefore passes can be conveniently bought using local currency, saving the time and stress.

Eurail's new Scandinavian packages also allow flexibility for different itineraries and country combinations. Those wanting to visit only one or two Scandinavian countries can choose among the Finland-Sweden, Denmark-Sweden and Norway-Sweden options. Additionally, the Norway and Sweden One Country Passes have been adjusted in line with many other Eurail Passes and now offer "Saver" discounts in 2nd class for groups of two to five travelers.

Traveling from Oslo to Stockholm takes just over six hours, while Stockholm to Copenhagen is about a five hour journey. Connections between Helsinki and Stockholm are made possible by ship, operated by Tallink Silja Oy, which gives all Eurail Pass holders a 50 percent reduction on the full fare of the crossing.

Eurail Group, [www.EurailGroup.com](http://www.EurailGroup.com)

## Travel World NEWS

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE

50 Washington Street • South Norwalk, CT 06854-2710 • Voice: 203-853-4955 • Fax: 203-866-1153 • [www.travelworldnews.com](http://www.travelworldnews.com)

Charles Gatt, Jr., Publisher  
[charlie@travelworldnews.com](mailto:charlie@travelworldnews.com)

Jennifer M. Lane, Editor  
[editor@travelworldnews.com](mailto:editor@travelworldnews.com)

Linda Rogers, Design Production Manager  
[production@travelworldnews.com](mailto:production@travelworldnews.com)

For Online Subscription, Renewal or Change of Address: [www.travelworldnews.com/subscribe](http://www.travelworldnews.com/subscribe)

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