



COSTA RICA:

*Great
Deals
During
The
Green
Season*

LATIN AMERICA

TRAVEL WORLD NEWS - SECTION THREE - MAY 2007

Great Deals During The Green Season in Costa Rica

Adventure seekers, nature lovers, couples, friends, and families: enchanting Costa Rica is a must visit destination no matter what the season.

BY JENNIFER M. LANE

Costa Rica, located in Central America, and bordered by Nicaragua, Panama, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, is one of the most visited international destinations. Enjoy lovely tropical beaches, the grandest adventures, the wonders of nature, scintillating culture, and all the necessary components for an ideal vacation.

The seven provinces of Costa Rica - San José, Alajuela, Cartago, Heredia, Guanacaste, Puntarenas, and Limón - offer an attractive tourist destination of almost limitless possibilities, that include extensive rainforests, volcanoes, rivers traveling through the mountains, beaches and natural resources safeguarded by an important organization of national parks and forest reserves.

During the green season, the rainforest is blossoming and the birds and wildlife are very active. There are fewer crowds, spacious beaches, and incredibly green landscapes. And with the special rates and packages offered by various hotels and tour operators, the green season is the perfect time to discover this incredible country.

Aguila de Osa Inn

Aguila de Osa Inn is located in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, situated on a high bluff overlooking the Aguitas River with panoramic views of Drake Bay. Reaching out into the Pacific Ocean along the southwest coast, the Osa was once described by National Geographic as one of the most biologically intense places on earth. Encompassing Corcovado National Park and Caño Island, two of Costa Rica's most prized protected areas, the Osa Peninsula is a priceless natural treasure with an abundance of tropical plants, mammals, insects and over 350 species of birds. The Aguila de Osa Inn offers visitors a comfortable and private refuge to explore the magic and beauty of mother nature.

Stay at Aguila de Osa Inn from May 1 – December 14, 2007 and receive an additional night (meals included) free. Package includes domestic flight San José – Palmar Sur – San José; round trip taxi Palmar Sur-Sierpe-Palmar Sur; round trip boat Sierpe-Aguila – Sierpe; four nights lodging on double standard rooms; welcome cocktail; all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner); appetizers at the bar; wine with dinner; one day guided tour to Corcovado National Park; one day guided tour to Caño Island Biological Reserve (snorkeling gear included); complementary kayak use; and all taxes. Price per person is \$885, price per child is \$670 (under 12, sharing room with parents). Single supplement is \$123 and additional nights are \$147 per person.

The Lodging & Meals Package includes all necessary trans-



The luxurious interior of Bahia Azul provides amazing ocean views.

fers from Palmar Sur or Drake Bay airports; lodging standard room; all meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner); appetizers at the bar and wine with dinner; and taxes. Green season rates from May 1- December 14, 2007 start at \$375 (ppdo) for two nights, and \$268 for children.

Aguila de Osa Inn, 866-924-8452,
reserve@aguiladeosa.com, info@aguiladeosa.com,
www.aguiladeosa.com

Bahia Azul

Bahia Azul, one of Costa Rica's newest and most notable luxury communities, offers beachfront condo rentals in Jaco Beach, Costa Rica. Guests can enjoy the added privacy and convenience of a deluxe private residence while still enjoying the first-class services of a luxury hotel. All units have private balconies, and with unobstructed ocean views and surf at the doorstep, Bahia Azul promises a dream vacation and sets a new standard for luxury accommodation on Costa Rica's Central Pacific Coast. Green Season rates from May 1 - November 15, 2007 range from \$235 for a two-bedroom ocean view unit to \$410 for a three-bedroom beach top-floor unit with rooftop terrace.

Bahia Azul, www.bahia-azul.com.

Bahía del Sol Beach Front Hotel & Suites

Located on the North Pacific Coast of Costa Rica in the Flamingo Beach area is the trendy beach Playa Potrero. Bahía del Sol Beach Front Hotel & Suites is settled in this unique bay. Enjoy magnificent sunsets, awesome views of the Catalinas Islands and the creative fusion of the resident Chef. This exclusive four-star beachfront boutique hotel is conveniently situated to enjoy all the area attractions, such as signature golf courses in Playa Conchal and in the Tamarindo

area, Hacienda Pinilla. Guests can choose from completely refurbished standard and deluxe rooms, studios and studio suites. Potrero Bay is one and half miles away from Flamingo Beach. On this beautiful beach, take relaxing walks, swim in the warm Pacific Ocean, horseback ride to the sunset or simply relax. The Restaurant Bahía offers exquisite creative tropical cuisine in an open palapa ranch with ocean view, right beside the pool bar. Green Season rates from May 1- December 23, 2007 are \$105 (standard double), \$135 (deluxe double), \$170 (one bedroom suite), and \$235 (two bedroom suite). Extra person pays \$20. For the Green Season, stay at Bahía del Sol for four nights and pay for only three, breakfast included.

Bahía del Sol Beach Front Hotel & Suites, www.potreroabay.com

Catalinas Beach Front Hotel & Suites

Located on the North Pacific Coast of Costa Rica, in the Flamingo Beach area is Playa Prieta Beach. Catalinas Beach Front Hotel & Suites is nestled on the highest point of a low hill, boasting ocean views that showcase awesome sunsets overlooking the Catalina Islands. Each room has its own bathroom and air conditioning. The Luxury Suites come with everything that is necessary for a comfortable stay, including fully equipped kitchen, living room, cable TV, and more. In front of the building are a private swimming pool and palapa, as well as tropical gardens. There is also a smaller children's pool. A short hike through the gardens of this beachfront property will bring you to exclusive Prieta Beach, with its fine and clear sand.

Green Season Rates from May 1 to December 23, 2007 are \$190 for a suite (four people), or \$225 for a suite (six people). Master Suites are \$290 (six people). Extra people are \$20. For the Green Season, stay at Catalinas for four nights and pay for only three, breakfast included.

Catalinas Beach Front Hotel & Suites, www.catalinasbeachsuites.com

Crocodile Bay Resort

Crocodile Bay Resort is a four-star destination that includes eco-tourism, world class sport fishing, and a newly constructed 5,000 square-foot luxury spa. Explore from the hidden waterfalls in the canopied rainforests to the vastness of the tropical Pacific. Enjoy special tours to sheltered coves that can only be reached by boat. Their fleet of 40 boats gives access to remote snorkeling and surfing spots, botanical gardens, and a wildlife refuge, as well as general sight-seeing explorations of the pristine waters. Sport fishing enthusiasts can seek the thrill of catching marlin, sailfish, tuna, dorado, roosterfish and red snapper, among others.

Green Season specials from July 1 - September 30, 2007 include Family Adventure Packages and a Honeymoon/Romance Package. With the all inclusive Summer Family Vacation Package Eco/Spa Package, children 12 and under stay for \$500 each. Package prices start at \$2,990 for three-days/five-nights, plus children 12 and under. For the all inclusive Honeymoon/Romance Package, book now and receive \$940 in free upgrades and gifts, including a free room upgrade with Jacuzzi, tandem couples massage, two Crocodile Bay logo terry robes, a spa facial treatment for her, rainforest eco tour, ocean kayaking, and a bottle of Champagne and tropical flower bouquet in room. Prices start at \$2,395 per person for a three-day/five-night package.

Crocodile Bay Resort,

www.crocodilebay.com,

www.costaricaecotour.com

Gaia Hotel and Reserve

Gaia Hotel and Reserve, Manuel Antonio, Costa Rica, is an adults only luxury boutique five-star hotel and resort that is a member of "Small Luxury Hotels of the World." The Gaia Hotel achieves an ideal blend of modern amenities and natural scenery. Nestled in the magnificent coastal forests of Costa Rica, the hotel's well-appointed, terraced suites and villas offer views of lush and pristine wild surroundings



Nestled in the forests of Costa Rica is the magnificent Gaia Hotel and Reserve.

that are beyond compare.


Gaia also offers all the modern conveniences than a guest could need, including an on-site restaurant, 24-hour room service, a spa, a gym, and a pool, plus many other personal services.

The hotel sits on a vast tract of lowland coastal forest, teeming with spectacular and rare wildlife. Originally serving as the site of Jardín Gaia, a center for na-

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MANUEL ANTONIO, COSTA RICA

La Mariposa HOTEL




1-800-572-6440
www.hotelmariposa.com
info@hotelmariposa.com

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tive orchids conservation and endangered wildlife rehabilitation, today the land remains set aside as a refuge for these many precious species. It is here that the privileged guest may take in the sights and sounds of Costa Rica's lush and exotic natural gifts.

Rates at Gaia Hotel go down by 30-40 percent on all room types during the Green Season which lasts from May 1-December 15, with additional savings of as much as 30 percent on the rooms for their packages, which include an Adventure Escape Package, a Relax Escape Package, a Spa Lovers Package, and a Budget Getaway Package. In addition, all reservations are subject to a free upgrade upon availability.

Gaia Hotel & Reserve, 800-226-2515, www.gaiahr.com

Grupo Mawamba

Mawamba Lodge is situated on the Northeast area of Costa Rica's Caribbean Coast on a sand bar between the Tortuguero Canals and the Caribbean Ocean, an excellent location that provides direct access to the pristine beach and the canals. Nestled in the lush rainforest, this is the ideal hideaway for nature lovers and the perfect place to discover the wonders of Tortuguero National Park. The Lodge is a 15-acre beachfront property, offering incredible views to the Tortuguero Lagoon and the canals.

Its beautiful gardens and rustic accommodations blend with the jungle vegetation, exotic birds and wildlife creating the perfect balance of nature. Guest accommodations consist of 36 comfortable rooms with private bathrooms, hot water, ceiling fans and chairs for a pleasant, relaxing evening. Hotel facilities include two docks on the canals, swimming pool with Jacuzzi, two family-style restaurants with local and international cuisine (one specially designed for groups and incentives), BBQ, bar, souvenir shop, relaxing ranchos with hammocks, natural trails, beach access in walking distance, sand volleyball court, and conference room where daily lectures on Tortuguero's natural history are presented.

Daily departure tour packages from San José include land and boat transportation, lodging for the selected number of nights, all meals, boat tours on the Canals, and walks in the National Park, lead by a professional guide. From May until November 30, 2007, they will offer reduced prices for their tours.

One of their most popular packages is the Mawamba Lodge Classic Tour. This package may include tour to Tortuguero town; hiking trip into the private trails of Grupo Mawamba; boat tour through the Tortuguero Canals; and optional night turtle tour. Price for two-days/one-night is \$178 ppdo and price for three-days/two-nights is \$246 ppdo. Services included in tour packages are land transportation San Jose - Caño Blanco dock - San Jose; boat transportation Caño Blanco dock - Tortuguero - Caño Balnco dock; lodging; all meals; regular tours as per the program selected ; government taxes; and a bilingual naturalist guide (English - Spanish).



Take a relaxing dip in the swimming pool at Mawamba Lodge.

Tortuguero is the most important site in the Occidental Caribbean area for the nesting of the endangered Green Sea Turtle. From July to September there will be an optional Night Turtle Tour for \$25 per person. This tour takes guests on a walking trail along the beach to a base or pre-established area where a "turtle guide" will let the group know when the turtles are spotted. The night turtle tour has to be reserved directly at the Lodge.

Grupo Mawamba, info@grupomawamba.com,

www.grupomawamba.com

Hotel Casa Roland

Hotel Casa Roland is located in the quiet embassy district of San Jose, a short distance from downtown, with its famous National Theater, museums, casinos, and world class health care facilities. The hotel has 10 standard rooms with one queen size bed, 11 standard rooms with two queen size beds, and two suites. They also have two pools and a Jacuzzi. Their bilingual staff will be happy to make all the arrangements for car rentals, domestic flights, accommodations around Costa Rica, dining around San Jose, nightlife, attractions, and shopping.

Hotel Casa Roland is affiliated with a prestigious tour company based in Costa Rica. They offer guests some of the most exciting adventures that can be found outside the hotel, including white water rafting, mountain biking, guided tours, bird watching excursions, surfing safaris and detailed surf reports, sport fishing, National Park expeditions, and rainforest programs.

Rates are \$135 plus tax for a room with one queen size bed. The room comes equipped with air conditioning, TV, and private bathroom. The rate includes full breakfast for two people. The room with two queen size beds is \$160 plus tax for two people. There is a surcharge of \$10 per night for extra people (the room can fight up to four people). They also have a suite which comes fully equipped with a kitchen, TV room, private bathroom, air conditioning and one queen size bed. The suite rate is \$185 plus tax, for two people with full breakfast included.

They are offering a special Green Season Package: stay three nights and the fourth night is 50 percent off.

Hotel Casa Roland, reservations@rolandhotels.com,

www.casa-roland.com

Hotel La Mariposa

Set in one of the most magnificent settings in the world, Hotel La Mariposa stands majestically atop the highest point in Manuel Antonio and is best known for its award-winning 360 degree view overlooking the blue waters of the Pacific Ocean, Quepos, and Manuel Antonio National Park. Nature and luxury flawlessly combine with 62 well-appointed rooms in a Spanish-Mediterranean architectural design, and tropical gardens with walkways and trails meticulously landscaped to reflect the natural beauty of Costa Rica's abundant plant and wildlife.

Experience the stunning magic of the legendary Manuel Antonio sunsets while sipping a tropical cocktail at the "Sunset Bar and Lounge," while dining in their world-class international restaurant, or from the comfort and privacy of a personal terrace or balcony.

For the Green Season, Hotel La Mariposa offers 10 or 15 percent discount on Internet bookings. Also, stay a minimum of three nights during the green season and receive a 10 percent discount, free breakfast and free shuttle service to the beach.

**Hotel La Mariposa, 800-572-6440,
www.hotelmariposa.com**

Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa

Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa is located on Punta Quepos in the tranquil area of Manuel Antonio. It is minutes from the World Famous Manuel Antonio National Park, the small sport fishing town of Quepos, and the local airport. With 108 rooms and suites, they offer a wide range of amenities with European refinement and a warm tropical touch. The Parador experience includes wildlife, tropical gardens, boundless pools, expansive views, excellent service, delicious meals, relaxing massages, romantic settings, exciting tours, and more. Hotel Parador has been in business for the last 11 years. The Premium plus rooms and Premium rooms have recently been remodeled, with new beds, curtains, furniture, and linens.

For May and June at the Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa, stay five nights and pay for only four nights (this offer applies to lodging and breakfast for two people).

In addition, their Ecological Package includes five-days and four-nights in a Jungle room; round trip San José-Hotel Parador, by air or by land; daily breakfast buffet; four hours guided tour to Manuel Antonio National Park; tour of choice, either Canopy or Damas Island Mangrove by boat; VIP service at the International Airport; and government sales taxes. Package price from May 1 to December 19, 2007 is \$967 per couple. Their Parador Package includes four-days and three-nights in a Jungle room; round trip San José-Hotel Parador, by air or by land; daily breakfast buffet; couple massage at the Pacifica Spa; welcome tropical cocktail; VIP service at the International Airport; and government sales taxes. Price from May 1 to December 19, 2007 is \$833 per couple.

Their Romantic Package includes four-days and three-nights in a Premium plus room with ocean view; gourmet dinner with sparkling wine in "La Reina" private dining room; breakfast buffet each morning; couple massage at the Pacifica Spa; complimentary fruit basket; complimentary transportation to Manuel Antonio National Park and beach; and government sales taxes. Prices from May 1 to December 19, 2007 are \$975 per couple.

**Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa,
info@hotelparador.com,
www.hotelparador.com**
NatureAir

NatureAir, Costa Rica's Premier Airline has been in operation for over 15 years having flown over one million people and more than 300,000 flights. NatureAir is also the region's largest private charter operator, last year having flown over 1,200 hours in charter flights alone. It's VIP service and strict policy of only flying twin engine aircrafts has positioned it as the exclusive airline of choice for Incentive Travel Groups, multi-national corporations,



Enjoy the refinement and tropical atmosphere at the Hotel Parador Boutique Resort & Spa.

local business, and real estate companies. Special products and campaigns have been developed to stay current with recent trends in tourism. For example, NatureAir is offering a 'Kids Fly Free Program' this summer after having seen an increase in family travel to Costa Rica. Other products like the 'Adventure Pass' cater to younger and more adventurous travelers that want

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**SUNBREEZE
HOTEL**

**Ambergris Caye, Belize
Packages Available
1-800-688-0191
www.sunbreeze.net**

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the freedom to travel where and whenever they want for one low price.

"We saw there was an opportunity to link unbelievable destinations of natural beauty and cultural celebration within the average nine day holiday, Costa Rica has so much to offer that staying in one destination has never been the typical Costa Rican vacation," said Alexi Huntley, VP Sales & Marketing of NatureAir.

Probably the most unique part of NatureAir is its efforts in ecotourism and sustainable practices. "Our President and Owner Alex E. Khajavi made it an order that we be the world's most sustainable airline," Mr. Huntley said. "Well, we went out and became the world's first and still only zero carbon emissions airline under the terms of the Kyoto Protocol. We offset our carbon emissions from burning fuel thru reforestation projects around the Osa Peninsula, in southern Costa Rica, we challenge the concept that an airline cannot be profitable and sustainable."

NatureAir, www.natureair.com



MANUEL ANTONIO, QUEPOS, COSTA RICA

Captivating

Costa Rica • Punta Quepos

Hotel Parador

Boutique Resort & Spa

European refinement... warm tropical touch!

A captivating view of the placid Pacific ocean and the luxuriant jungle... fine dining at cozy restaurants... action for eco-adventure enthusiasts... or simply being pampered all day at the Pacifica Spa are just some of the many treasures to be discovered at Hotel Parador, Boutique Resort & Spa.

Reservations: Tel. (506) 777-1414
E-mail: info@hotelparador.com
www.hotelparador.com

Tilajari Resort

Tilajari Resort is a budget luxury resort hotel near the Costa Rican Arenal Volcano, famous for family adventure vacations and nature eco tours. It is one of the best semi all-inclusive Costa Rica hotels/resorts, and the only one that offers 32 deluxe suites, 40 standard rooms and four family connected rooms. In addition, it features a bar, restaurant, swimming pool, gift shop, sport facilities, botanical garden, butterfly garden, conference rooms and many other services, all spread over 35 acres along the banks of the San Carlos River.

Tilajari Resort has decided to get better and not bigger like most hotels. In 2006, they started an extensive remodeling project. Already completed are 32 deluxe suites featuring everything new, including new queen sized beds, all new furniture, mini-bar with refrigerator, 26" TV and coffee maker. They have also installed new air conditioning units in all the rooms and they have improved the swimming pool area to include a new Jacuzzi. The butterfly garden has also been remodeled and their Katira restaurant has new furniture and a new Chef, Manuel Tuz. All of this is a continued effort by Tilajari to provide a superior product at affordable prices. Due to their size and variety of activities, it is never too crowded to truly enjoy your experience.

Green season rates from May 1 through October 31, 2007 are at \$76 (standard double), \$84 Standard King Size, \$90 Junior Suite Single Deluxe, \$100 Junior Suite Double Deluxe, \$90 Family Suite Double, \$15 for an extra person.

Tilajari Resort, info@tilajari.com,

www.tilajari.com

Vida Aventura Nature Park

The new concept of relaxation and adventure in Guanacaste has a name: Vida Aventura Nature Park. They have the best combination of attractions and services, including El Gavilan Canopy Tour, El Puntalito Restaurante, Los Rucos Horse Back Riding Area, La Pozas Pool and Hot Spring Areas, El Resbalon Water Slide, La Troleada Trails

and much more. They guarantee the best for individuals, incentives, team parties or groups. Rack rates until November 30, 2007 all in one is \$105 per person.

Canopy Tour El Gavilan is a sensation of adventure and adrenaline combined with the incredible landscapes of Dry Tropical Forest, ancient volcanic lava canyons, and beautiful natural spots at an ecological and cattle farm.

Horse Back Riding Los Rucos offers the opportunity to spur on cattle in the best Guanacaste style. Afterwards, ride through the Tropical Dry Forest with hundreds of oak trees which have a special ecological value due to their biological uniqueness.

La Troleada trails are a truly healthy activity for soul and body. The blend of different landscapes together with the flora and fauna of the site is unequalled. The breathtaking views of Miravalles and Rincon de la Vieja volcanoes will leave everlasting memories.

At Mud Bath & Hot Springs Las Paylas enjoy a very healthy and relaxing experience: cleansing the whole body with volcanic mud. After a day of activities and fun, relax in the pool and hot springs area. Children can enjoy the pool in a safe and natural setting. Lunch is also offered with Costa Rican traditional food at "El Puntalito" Restaurant. Taste the natural flavor of authentic regional products harvested in this land, prepared and served by the gentle hands of the people. Children under three years old are free and children from three to nine with two adults pay 50 percent of the rate.

Vida Aventura Nature Park,
info@vidaaventurapark.com,

www.vidaaventurapark.com

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Spa

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Spa, built by former Costa Rican President Rodrigo Carazo, is a charming mountain hotel located adjacent to a working dairy farm one hour away from the San Jose International Airport on a well-paved country highway. The Hacienda contains the reception area, lobby bar,

private movie theater, conference rooms, and country style restaurant overlooking the village casitas, and a panorama of Arenal Volcano. The well-appointed casitas are comfortable replicas of traditional adobe farmhouses complete with whitewashed walls, tile floors, cane ceilings and adobe wood burning fireplaces. Resident guides lead nature walks through the adjacent cloud forest reserve which is excellent for bird watching as well as a variety of other nature tours.

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Nature Spa Green Season Package allows visitors to enjoy the cool mountain mist of the "Silence of the Angels" (El Silencio de Los Angeles) with a three-night stay at Villa Blanca for the price of two nights. The sister hotel Si Como No Resort & Spa, is a completely renovated four-star property approximately 23 miles from San Jose. This Green Hotel limited introductory offer includes full complimentary breakfast, a 50 percent discount for the Cloud Forest Guided Nature Walk, and a \$25 spa advantage discount at their Serenity Spa facilities. This offer is good from May 1–November 14, 2007. The rate on this special applies to the room category of your choice.

The Si Como No Resort and Villa Blanca "Best of Both Worlds" Green Hotel Combination Package offers an eight-night stay for the price of six-nights. Enjoy three nights for the price of two at Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Nature Spa near San Ramon, enroute to Arenal Volcano, and five additional nights for the price of four at Si Como No Resort & Spa near Manuel Antonio National Park. This offer is good from May 1 - November 14, 2007. The rate on this special applies to the room category of your choice.

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Spa with Aguila de Osa Inn in Drake Bay presents the beauty of the Cloud Forest combined with the exotic magic of the Tropical Rain Forest of Corcovado National Park. Enjoy a seven-night stay for the price of five, four nights in Aguila de Osa for the price of three, and

three nights in Villa Blanca for the price of two. This package includes domestic flight San José – Palmar Sur – San José; round trip taxi Palmar Sur-Sierpe-Palmar Sur; round trip boat Sierpe-Aguila – Sierpe; four nights lodging in double standard rooms at Aguila de Osa for the price of three; welcome cocktail; all meals at Aguila de Osa Inn (breakfast, lunch and dinner daily), appetizers at the bar, wine with dinner; one day guided tour to Corcovado National Park; one day guided tour to Caño Island Biological Reserve (snorkeling gear included); complementary kayak use; three nights lodging in double superior private casita at Villa Blanca for the price of two, including full breakfast; guided Nature Walk to Villa Blanca Cloud Forest (two hour tour); and a \$25 discount Spa Gift Certificate to apply to any Spa treatment. Price is \$1,060 ppdo (taxes included). Package is valid from May 1 - December 14, 2007.

Villa Blanca Cloud Forest Hotel & Spa,
reservations@greenhotelscr.com,
www.villablanca-costarica.com

FISHING ADVENTURES AND MORE IN PANAMA ONBOARD M/V CORAL STAR

M/V Coral Star is a 115-foot Mother-ship live-aboard that offers first-class service with a world-class fishing experience. Their trips run June through November yearly. The M/V Coral Star Adventures consist of the following Panama offerings: deep sea fishing, deep sea diving, ocean fly fishing, eco-tourism, two oceans expedition/canal transit, and more. Participate in a seven-day cruise that is up close and personal through the Panama Canal. They take up to 16 people maximum to follow the path of the pirates. They will take travelers through the Darien, Contradora and the Pearl Islands (where Survivor was filmed), and on through the Panama Canal. Guests will enjoy the scenery, wildlife, short hikes, indigenous Indian cultures, snorkeling, kayaking, diving, fishing and all this area has to offer.

The Coral Star's fully air-conditioned mahogany and teak interior, entertainment center, wet bar, and ship's library provides

a home-like atmosphere to dine, lounge and relax from daily activities.

Her accommodations consist of two master staterooms with queen size beds and full bath on the main deck, and two deluxe and four standard cabins on the lower deck. All staterooms have individually controlled A/C, carpeting, and generous storage capacity.

The full stainless steel galley on the main deck rivals any gourmet restaurant. Passengers will be served three meals a day in the formal sit-down dining area, plus have morning and mid afternoon snacks.

Days aboard the Coral Star are full of activity and fun. Go scuba diving, sea kayaking, exploring or snorkeling from their 18-foot and 22-foot motor launches. A color TV/VCR with tape library, stereo system, books, games and puzzles are available for those with relaxation in mind.

The M/V Coral Star is run by an experienced captain and crew whose main goal is to ensure a safe, fun and comfortable cruise.

M/V Coral Star, 866-924-2837,
 info@coralstar.com, www.coralstar.com

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FRANCISCO XAVIER LOPEZ MENA TO HEAD UP MEXICO TOURISM BOARD



FRANCISCO XAVIER LOPEZ MENA

Tourism veteran Francisco Xavier Lopez Mena will be heading up the Mexico Tourism Board (MTB), Mexico's tourism promotion agency, focusing his efforts on consolidating the strong growth that has

positioned Mexico as one of the top travel destinations worldwide.

Lopez Mena was appointed the MTB's CEO by incoming president Felipe Calderon.

He succeeds Magdalena Carral, who occupied the position since early 2006.

Mr. Lopez Mena brings with him decades of public and private sector experience in tourism and related sectors in Quintana Roo State, home to such important tourism destinations for Mexico as Cancun, Cozumel, Isla Mujeres, the Mayan Riviera and the Costa Maya cruise port.

Lopez Mena's past positions in the tourism industry include President of the Cancun Tourism Board and President of the Chamber of Deputies' Tourism Commission, as well as President of the Board of both the ground transportation company Autocar Cancun and the travel agency Excell.

In addition to a distinguished career in tourism, Lopez Mena has also been recognized for his work with the Mexican Red

Cross, high-level positions at La Salle University and Board positions at several banks, including Banamex, Inverlat, Banco Internacional and Bancomer.

A native of Merida, Lopez Mena received an undergraduate law degree from Mexico's Iberoamerican University and also completed additional coursework at Harvard and Tulane Universities in the United States as well as at the Instituto de Empresas in Madrid, Spain.

The Mexico Tourism Board (MTB), www.visitmexico.com

SPICE OF LIFE CULINARY PACKAGE AT CASA DE SIERRA NEVADA

Sazon, the cooking school in an 18th century colonial mansion, and Casa de Sierra Nevada, the famed Orient-Express hotel, offer a four-night Spice of Life Culinary Package, the ultimate pairing for travelers with a penchant for cooking.

This four-night package is available for Monday arrivals and Friday departures.

Highlights of the package include accommodations at the luxurious Casa de Sierra Nevada; an exclusive two-hour tour of the colorful San Miguel Market on Tuesday with a chef as the guide; on Wednesday guests will immerse themselves in some of the renowned regional cuisines of Mexico, ranging from Oaxaca to the Yucatan, and learn about the depth of the culinary offerings of the country; on Thursday guests will embrace San Miguel cuisine with heirloom recipes from local cooks and learn how the Spanish colonials influenced the cuisine; evening wine tasting with local expert; one three-course menu du

jour dinner at one of Casa de Sierra Nevada's restaurants; and culinary amenities upon arrival.

Offered April 9 - September 28, 2007, prices start at approximately \$1,352 per person for single occupancy or \$780 per person for double occupancy for the Spice of Life Culinary Package. All rates are based on availability and do not include tax or gratuity. Package price is converted from pesos to dollars at time of departure.

At Casa de Sierra Nevada guests will enjoy one of 33 rooms housed in five colonial mansions each featuring five to seven guestrooms or suites, surrounded by cloistered outdoor courtyards with fountains, small gardens and al fresco corridors. Each guest room is architecturally unique and is furnished in its own individual decor. All capture the rich history of the area with decorative touches such as hand painted Talavera tiles, bovedas - curved or domed ceilings, canterra fireplaces, polished copper sinks or original paintings by local artists.

In addition to the Spice of Life package, Sazon offers a variety of programs ranging from two hour cooking classes on local specialties and tours of the market to week-long culinary packages. Sazon's retail space offers hand-blown glassware, vivid textiles, and artful pottery created exclusively for Sazon by Mexico's master artists.

The store also offers traditional Mexican cazuelas, molcajetes, and signed folk pottery along with some of the latest kitchen finery and gadgetry. A lavish central courtyard - just off the retail spaces - has a kitchen herb garden, a soothing fountain, and an open dining room with a massive stone fireplace.

To reach San Miguel de Allende fly into either Mexico City (a three and a half hour drive) or the Guanajuato-Leon Airport (one and a half hour drive.) The Guanajuato-Leon Airport has direct flights from Dallas, Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago.

Casa de Sierra Nevada, 800-701-1561, www.sazonsanmiguel.com, www.casadesierranevada.com
Orient-Express Hotels, Trains & Cruises, 800-237-1236, www.orient-express.com

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CASA VELAS RECEIVES AAA FOUR DIAMOND AWARD



Left to Right: Tony Perrone, Mexico Director, AAA National; Juan Vela, Vice President of Grupo Velas; Luis Angarita, Director General of Casa Velas Hotel Boutique; and Rodolfo Gonzalez, Resident Manager of Casa Velas Hotel Boutique at the AAA Four Diamond Award Ceremony at Casa Velas Hotel Boutique in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Casa Velas Hotel Boutique in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, is again joining the ranks of AAA Four Diamond Award winners. Casa Velas is the only adults-only all-inclusive golf resort in Mexico to receive this AAA Four Diamond award.

"We are excited to receive again this independent citation of superiority," said Luis Angarita, Director General of Casa Velas Hotel Boutique. "It sends a significant and reliable message to our customers about the top quality of our hotel."

The AAA Four Diamond rating is an assurance of superiority. Of an estimated 32,000 AAA Rated lodgings, only 3.25 percent rate four diamonds each year and the ratings are based on unannounced evaluations of lodgings and restaurants in such areas as cleanliness, ambiance, amenities and service.

Casa Velas, a member of The Leading Small Hotels of the World, features 80 suites, some with private pools and Jacuzzis. The perfect vacation for golfers, Casa Velas is nestled on the greens of Marina Vallarta's 18-hole golf course and also offers golf privileges at two other 18-hole golf courses. The Wellness Spa/Medi Holiday program offers an in-house nutritionist and cardiologist for a total health assessment. Spa Casa Velas encompasses five treatment rooms, a hydrotherapy area, a fitness gym and a salon. Casa Velas, 866-612-1097, www.hotelcasavelas.com

MEXICO BOUTIQUE HOTELS ANNOUNCE STAY AND WIN PROMOTION

Mexico Boutique Hotels, the one-stop shop for finding the perfect Mexican vacation, announces its Stay and Win promotion, where travelers can win a stay to a charming property of their choice in the collection. Just book a minimum three-night stay at any one of the company's properties now through June 2007 and travelers will automatically be entered to win a free, three-night return stay to another Mexico Boutique Hotel. Register online at www.mexicoboutiquehotels.com. Valid for bookings made now, for travel through June 30, 2007.

Mexico Boutique Hotels, 800-728-9098, www.mexicoboutiquehotels.com

MEXICO'S INTERNATIONAL TOURISM REVENUES REACH HISTORIC HIGH

Despite Hurricane Wilma's lingering effect on rooms in the Mexican Caribbean in early 2006, Mexico closed the year with historically high international tourism revenues, pointing to a full recovery of the industry.

According to statistics released by Mexico's Tourism Secretariat (Sectur), Mexico received 21.35 million international visitors in 2006, a 2.6 percent dip from 2005, due in part to reduced room availability stemming from Hurricane Wilma. Despite this, from April to December 2006, international tourism arrivals for 2006 were above figures posted the year before in all but two months.

Due to more aggressive marketing to affluent travelers, revenue generated by these tourists reached a record high of \$12.18 billion.

International visitors (excluding border tourists) to Mexico were reported to have spent an average of \$710.30 per person per visit in 2006, representing a 4.7 percent increase from 2005.

Historically high international tourism revenues helped enable the tourism industry's trade balance to post an impressive \$4.07 billion surplus in 2006.

Cruise ship passenger arrivals posted strong numbers as well.

"The figures posted in 2006 demonstrate that within a year of a devastating hurricane, Mexico's tourism industry was already back to normal," said Mexico Tourism Secretary Rodolfo Elizondo. "We expect 2007 to be yet another successful year for our tourism industry, with increased growth across all segments."

Mexico Tourism Board, www.visitmexico.com

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LA CASA QUE CANTA INTRODUCES FIRST EVER SUMMER VACATION SPECIAL



La Casa Que Canta, voted the "#1 Resort in Mexico" on the "World's Best Places To Stay" list by Conde Nast Traveler Magazine this year and the "#1 Resort in Mexico" for Travel + Leisure Magazine's "Top 500 Greatest Hotels" in 2007, is offering its first-ever summer vacation special at savings up to 20 percent.

The Summer Promotion Package, valid from June to September 2007, offers rates from \$352 per night for seven nights or more and includes a complimentary cooking class for two to learn how to make a three-course menu including a Red or Green "Chilaquiles" appetizer, "Veracruz" style fish or Coconut Shrimp entree and the resort's signature dessert, Banana Cheesecake. These rates represent a 20 percent savings off rack rates.

Guests staying for five or six nights receive rates from \$368 per night, a 15 percent savings, and a complimentary bottle of wine on arrival. For stays of three or four nights, the rate is \$392 per night and includes a bottle of tequila upon arrival (10 percent savings).

All rates quoted are per night, single or double occupancy, exclusive of taxes and service and subject to availability. A third person may stay in the suite for \$100 per night. A meal plan is available for an additional \$75 per person, per night.

La Casa Que Canta is a stylish, serene refuge overlooking Zihuatanejo Bay. Translated as "the house that sings," the sounds of the sea are audible everywhere at this resort. Most of the 25 suites have private pools and sea view verandahs. The resort's facilities include two pools, a multi-tiered sunning terrace, a new spa, gym, restaurant and bar and reading room.

El Ensueno and El Murmullo are two ultra-private four-suite villas each with a view of the Bay of Zihuatanejo, private chef, concierge and private swimming pools. The suites are the epitome of luxury, each having en suite plunge pools, air-conditioning in each bedroom and courtesy amenity bars offering water, beers and soft drinks. In El Ensueno, suites have plasma screen televisions. All guests have full use of La Casa Que Canta, including the new spa with its range of deluxe signature services including massages, Cactus Anti-Cellulite Wrap, Aromatherapy Facial and private yoga sessions.

Suites in the villas can also be rented individually.

La Casa Que Canta, 888-523-5050,
lacasaquecanta@prodigy.net.mx, www.lacasaquecanta.com

LAS FLORES BEACH RESORT RECOGNIZED AT TIANGUIS TURISTICO

Las Flores Beach Resort in Mazatlan, Mexico, received the prestigious MLT Vacations Quality Assurance Award, March 26, before an international audience of travel industry elite at 2007 Tianguis Turistico in Acapulco, Mexico.

"Las Flores Beach Resort in Mazatlan has demonstrated exceptional customer service, outstanding operations and excellent communication practices for MLT Vacations and its customers," said Elizabeth Moriarty, Vice President of Product Development, MLT Vacations. "We are pleased to recognize Las Flores Beach Resort for all its efforts in consistently delivering exemplary customer service and ensuring our customers are happy."

"We at Las Flores Beach Resort appreciate the recognition of our hard work during the past year," said Luis Gurrola, the hotel's manager. "We are honored to receive this recognition from our esteemed colleagues and good friends at MLT Vacations."

Located in the heart of Mazatlan's Golden Zone, the oceanfront Las Flores Beach Resort houses standard rooms, suites and studios with kitchenettes. The family-friendly resort offers wireless Internet access, restaurant, two swimming pools with waterfall, Jacuzzi, room service, babysitting services and sport fishing reservations.

Las Flores Beach Resort, www.lasflores.com;
MLT Vacations Inc., www.worryfreevacationsagent.com,
www.nwaworldvacationsagent.com;
Mazatlán at www.gomazatlán.com

TRAVEL AGENTS WELCOMED AT VILLA GROUP RESORTS

To show its appreciation to travel agents, The Villa Group Resorts is offering special rates to agents at its portfolio of properties in Cabo San Lucas, Nuevo Vallarta and Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Situated north of Puerto Vallarta in Vallarta-Nayarit, Villa del Palmar Flamingos Beach Resort & Spa is one of the newest properties on this of beach. The upscale, family-friendly resort features 275 ocean view suites. Here, agents can enjoy a \$79 nightly rate for a deluxe studio, with an all-inclusive option available for an additional \$69 per person daily. All deluxe studios feature a kitchenette, two queen-size beds, dining area, digital flat screen television, individually controlled center air conditioning, direct dial telephone, ceiling fan and outdoor balcony with patio furniture.

Situated in the Hotel District between Marina Vallarta and downtown Puerto Vallarta, Villa del Palmar Puerto Vallarta Beach Resort & Spa attracts both families and couples seeking a relaxed environment. This upscale beachfront resort offers 562 guest rooms, and one- and two-bedroom suites with furnished balconies.

Travel agents can take advantage of a \$69 nightly rate for a junior suite available for single or double occupancy. An all-inclusive option is \$50 additional per person daily. With 500 square feet of space, all junior suites provide a kitchenette, dining area, digital TV, central air conditioning, direct dial telephone and outdoor balcony or terrace with patio furniture.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Ski Chile This Season With Sportstour

For the ultimate snow experience, Sportstour's Ski Guide finds the best ski vacation areas and resorts in Chile.

BY JENNIFER M. LANE

Chile is a country of contrasts and great beauty that offers a splendid vacation. The Mediterranean landscapes of central Chile give life to Santiago the capital, which is surrounded by fertile wine-producing valleys and modern ski resorts. Sportstour's guide to the best ski resorts can assist with planning the perfect skiing getaway. For any ski program booked with Sportstour this year, they will greet each couple with a bottle of Chilean wine and a corkscrew free of cost.

Portillo Ski Center

Portillo Ski Center is situated in the Fifth Region, approximately 92 miles from Santiago. Located approximately 9,000-feet above sea level, it is one of the oldest, most beautiful, and most famous centers in the country, offering magnificent runs and a beautiful environment in which to ski. For those who prefer a bit more adrenaline, Portillo also offers its visitors heli-skiing and snow boarding. The Hotel Portillo offers a great variety of services for guests, including a heated swimming pool, gym, sauna, restaurants, nursery, transportation, entertainment, cinema and ski school. Their 2007 season runs from June 17 to October 10.

La Parva Ski Center

Situated at an altitude of approximately 8,800-feet, La Parva Ski Center offers something that no other resort can offer: a view of the valley of Santiago in all its magnitude. It also offers an infrastructure aimed at providing tourists and sporting enthusiasts from all around the world with everything they require. With 14 runs of different lengths and vertical drops, it offers a variety of alternatives for all types of skiers. As with other centers, there are also the necessary facilities available to enjoy snowboarding and heli-



Valle Nevado Ski Center.

skiing. Villa La Parva offers accommodation, restaurants, equipment rental, a ski school, bar, transportation, cafeteria, club, medical clinic and parking. Their 2007 season runs from June 9 to October 2.

El Colorado/Farellones Ski Center

El Colorado/Farellones Ski Center is situated on the Metropolitan region approximately 24 miles from Santiago. The maximum altitude is approximately 11,000-feet, with a fall of approximately 3,000-feet. Receiving many short snows falls with an average of approximately 16-feet of precipitation in a normal year; El Colorado also has a snowmaking system to guarantee snow throughout the season. Farellones and El Colorado are close to the Center and offer a variety of accommodations, in particular, the Apart Hotel Colorado and the Hotel Posada de Farellones, the latter being one of the first to be built in this resort in the 1940's. There are also restaurants, cafeterias, clubs, transportation, a ski school, equipment

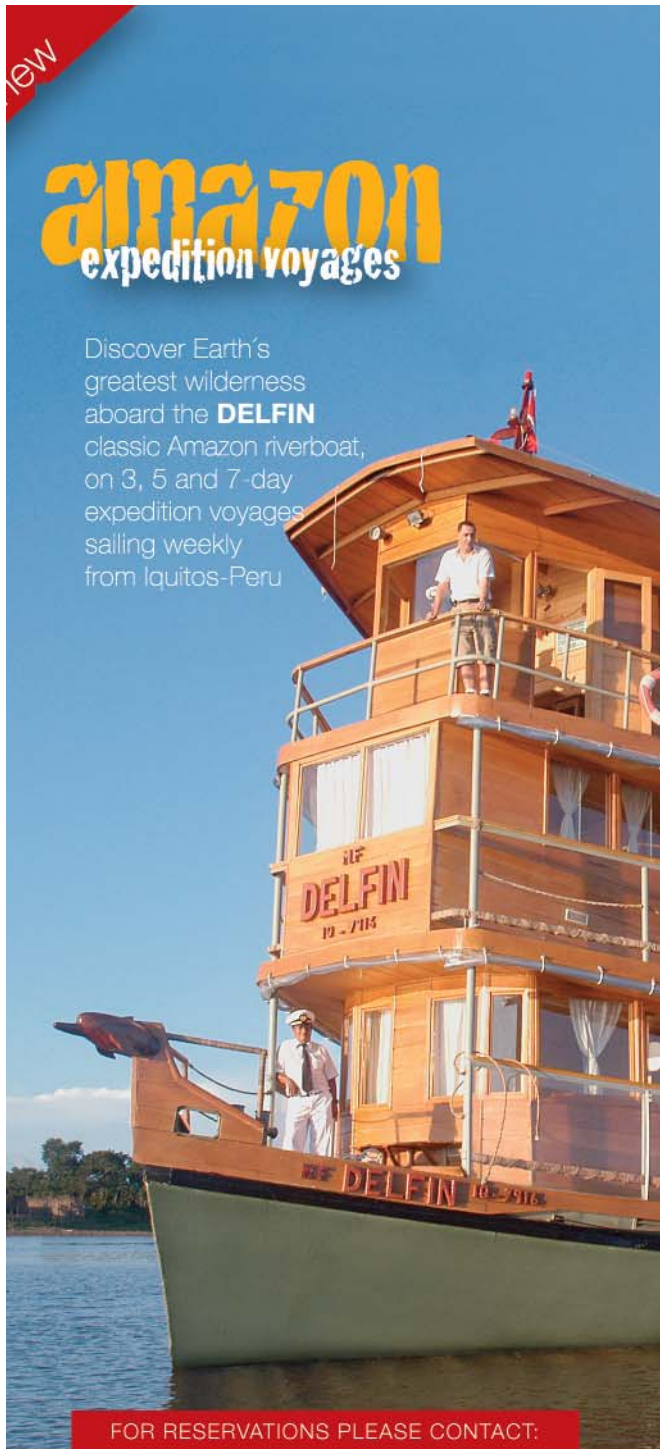
rental, and more. Their 2007 season runs from June 15 to October 12.

Valle Nevado Ski Center

Situated on the Metropolitan region 37 miles from Santiago, Valle Nevado Ski Center is not only the newest winter resort in the country; it is also the largest and most modern. Located 9,922-feet above sea level, Valle Nevado boasts a skiing surface area of 21,600 acres and a 2,656-foot drop. Together with La Parva and El Colorado-Farellones, these three ski Centers form the largest skiing area in South America. For snowboarding fanatics, Valle Nevado stays on top of modern technology and maintains its Snow Park and Half Pipe in perfect condition.

The Half Pipe provides an ultimate experience in the frequently-practiced Free Style method; and the Snow Park has a special area reserved for jumps, tricks and spins (it can also be used with skis). Their 2007 season runs from June 16 to October 1.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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SPORTSTOUR FROM PAGE 11 Chillan Ski & Spa Resort

Situated in the 8th region with 28 runs is Chillan Ski & Spa Resort. With nine lifts (on triple seat, three double seats and five surfaces) it has the longest run in South America, at approximately eight miles. 30 percent of the area is for beginners, 40 percent is for intermediate and 30 percent is designated for experts only. There is a vertical drop of approximately 3,600-feet, and the first snow park of South America. It is also one of the centers which offer the most alternative activities, including Nordic skiing, randonee, heliski, snowmobiles and sledges. The Thermal Center has nine blue-water pools which are open all year round. With many beautiful natural attractions, summer here offers visitors a recreational and relaxing retreat. Their 2007 season runs from June 10 to October 14.

Villarrica/Pucon Ski Center

Located on the slopes of one of the well-studied volcanoes in South America, the Villarrica Ski Center offers its visitors more than just a place to ski: it also offers the opportunity to discover and enjoy one of the most beautiful zones of the country, with many other activities to complement skiing in this unforgettable area. The Center is inside the borders of the Villarrica National Park and from the slopes of the volcano you can view five beautiful lakes, as well as enjoy thermal baths and the nightlife in the nearby cities of Pucon and Villarrica. Managed by the Grand Hotel Pucon, this Center has nine lifts of seat and surface types between the different grades of slopes, making it easy to move between slopes. The Center offers various services to complement skiing including a cafeteria, equipment hire, parking, a small medical clinic and skiing classes. The access to the Center is via an unpaved road and during the season Sportstour recommends the use of snow-chains. Their 2007 season runs from June 29 to October 12.

Antillanca Ski Center

Surrounded by volcanoes and the lovely backdrop of Puyehue National Park, Antillanca Ski Center was founded in 1951 when Carlos Bushman, representative of the Club Andino Osorno, installed the first shelter for skiers in the area, baptizing it with the name Antillanca, meaning "jewel of the sun" in the Mapuche language. Adequately equipped with an optimal hotel infrastructure, little by little, this ski center has been earning a name for itself among national ski complexes.

Antillanca boasts excellent snow conditions for all types of skiers and snowboarders. Also of note are the off-piste slopes and cornices, most appreciated by snowboarders. The Center is equipped with four drag lifts and one chair lift. It features a hotel, restaurant, a pub, day care, gym, television room, conference room, game room and dance club. Their 2007 season runs from June 3 to October 10.

Sportstour, mpulido@sportstour.cl

PROGRAMS TO MANU AND INCA TRAIL IN PERU WITH INKANATURA TRAVEL

Manu is one of the favorite destinations for those passengers with a deep interest in nature and birdwatching in Peru.

InkaNatura Travel is one of the most reputable companies in this area who operates several programs using its lodge network: Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge in the cloud forest area, and Manu Wildlife center in the jungle lowlands, close to the famous macaw clay lick, tapir lick and lakes, with the endangered giant otters among other wildlife attractions.

As all the programs start from Cusco, it is easy to offer a best seller combination in Peru: Cusco, the land of the Incas, and Manu, the best of the Peruvian rainforest.

Focusing on high quality service, InkaNatura Travel and its strategic partner, Pisco Airlines, has restarted the air connection from Cusco to Boca Manu using a new Cessna Gran Caravan equipped with the latest technology.

In addition to its nature programs, InkaNatura is also operating several trekking programs from Cusco including Choquequirao, Salcantay and Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. For those treks this company is using the high quality tents (The North face VE 25 model 2007).

InkaNatura Travel, postmaster@inkanatura.com.pe, www.inkanatura.com

SAVE ON SOLO TRAVEL TO THE AMAZON WITH INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITIONS

There's a good reason why the Amazon Voyage has been a perennial favorite of International Expeditions travelers: it is Earth's greatest wilderness with a huge variety of wildlife and interesting cultures.

To make it easier for solo travelers to explore the Amazon, International Expeditions has come up with a special offer: on their June 22 and July 13 Amazon Voyage departures, the single supplement will be \$300, a savings of over \$1,500.

The Amazon is a spectacular destination. Colorful wildlife, a chance to meet the intriguing people of the jungle and a wealth of

remarkable landscapes have made the Amazon Voyage one of International Expeditions' most sought-after journeys.

Guests will travel aboard elegant, classically styled riverboats specially designed to explore the remote reaches of the Amazon. They will see a variety of tropical wildlife, including up to 15 species of primates and more than one hundred kinds of birds. Find rarities like macaws and hoatzins in addition to pink river dolphins, sloths and red howler monkeys.

Some may even spot the endangered giant otter or rare harpy eagle. The program also visits remote villages to meet the inhabitants of the rainforest.

International Expeditions' long history means passengers will be greeted like family. Throughout the journey, guests will be accompanied by skilled and knowledgeable guides to help develop greater understanding of the region's wildlife and history. Guests may also enjoy excursions along Blackwater Rivers and try piranha fishing.

10-day voyage prices are June 22 \$2,748 (lower deck) \$2,848 (upper deck), and July 13 \$2,898 (lower deck) \$2,998 (upper deck), plus the reduced single supplement of \$300. All costs are ppdo.

Special single supplement offer is only open to people not occupying the same household. International and in-country airfare not included. In-country air must be purchased from International Expeditions.

International Expeditions, 800-633-4734, nature@ietravel.com, www.ietravel.com

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ADVENTURES INCORPORATED ANNOUNCES THE ULTIMATE ANTARCTICA ADVENTURE

As an extension to its product range in Latin America, ADVENTURES Incorporated (A.I.) has announced the ultimate in adventure - Antarctica. Considered by many as the final travel frontier, Antarctica is becoming increasingly popular for all adventurers and is moving up the wish list of Globetrotting travelers, partly due to limited numbers that are able to visit this region.

There are no permanent human residents and Antarctica has never had an indigenous population. The only residents are researchers, varying from approximately 4,000 people in summer to 1,000 people in winter. Only cold-adapted plants and animals survive in Antarctica, including penguins, fur seals, blue whales, mosses, lichens, and many types of algae.

The Antarctic expedition cruises offered by A.I. operate aboard purpose built vessels (previously operated as Russian research ice breakers) that have been fully converted for the comfort of clients. They offer travelers up to four landings a day, maximized by the extended daylight in the south, as well as having clients up close and personal with a menagerie of polar wildlife. Other adventure options include overnight camping, kayaking and even diving.

"Antarctica by its nature and location is a high cost trip, but within those parameters we have prices to cater to all budgets," says Don Forster, A.I.'s Product Development Manager. "Savvy agents that specialize in this unique destination can earn big commissions by having the knowledge and expertise to confidently sell this niche product."

With over 22 departures during the season (Northern Hemisphere winter), and a wide selection of itineraries that may include South Georgia and the Falklands Islands, and pricing for all budgets, Antarctica is a new jewel in the Goway family of destinations.

Savings of up to \$2,200 are available on selected berth options on specific sailings. "Antarctica is a big ticket item, and by launching these savings, we are giving agents the tools that they need to convert potential travelers," added Mr. Forster.

Departures offering significant savings include Christmas and New Year in the Weddell Sea. Departing 21, 2007, this 13-day cruise from Ushuaia explores the Weddell Sea, which is synonymous with the torturous northerly drift of Shackleton's Endurance expedition. Travelers have the opportunity to explore where few are able, on a truly exploratory voyage of sunsets and ice sculptures. Price is from \$8,150 per person. Also available is the Weddell Sea Explorer departing December 28, 2007. There is also a 19-days Antarctica, Falklands & South Georgia tour from \$7,800 per person.

ADVENTURES Incorporated/Goway
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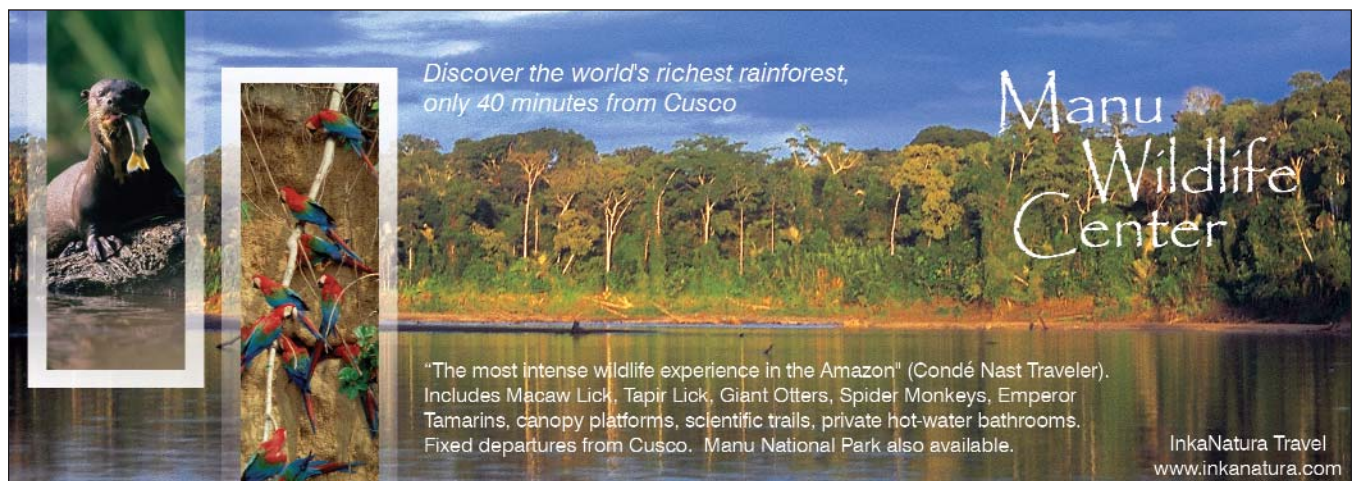
La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa is located in Imbabura Province, just outside of the town of Cotacachi, and near Otavalo in Ecuador, famous for its markets where the local indigenous peoples have sold their hand crafted goods since ancient times.

Patricio Hidrova, Manager of La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa, has announced that they have now installed wireless internet access for their guests.

The rooms and suites at La Mirage are each individually styled and feature a fireplace and the most up-to-date amenities. The Roman Spa is fully equipped with a swimming pool, Jacuzzi whirlpool, exercise room, and luxurious treatment facilities. Treatments and massages available include Reflexology, Aromatherapy, and a Purification Treatment performed by a female shaman.

Guests can enjoy the gardens and grounds, and activities include horseback riding, mountain climbing, hiking, mountain biking, tennis, or swimming. Bird watching enthusiasts will enjoy the variety of birds inhabiting the area. La Mirage also boasts one of the best gourmet restaurants in Ecuador.

La Mirage has earned the distinction of being the only Relais & Chateaux in Ecuador and one of only a handful in South America. **La Mirage Garden Hotel & Spa**, 800-327-3573, travel@LARC1.com, www.LARC1.com



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InkaNatura Travel
www.inkanatura.com

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

With a cluster of Villa Group properties located on a prime beach location in Cabo San Lucas, the company offers travel agents special rates at its trio of properties situated in a private enclave overlooking El Médano Beach.

Fresh from a \$2.25 million renovation, the family-friendly Villa del Palmar Beach Resort & Spa welcomes agents with an \$89 nightly rate for a junior suite. A meal plan option is \$59 per person daily. Junior suites include a fully equipped kitchen, dining area or breakfast bar, furnished balcony, air conditioning, ceiling fan and complimentary satellite television.

At the ultra luxurious residence-style Villa La Estancia Beach Resort & Spa, travel agents are pampered with a \$119 nightly rate, while the upscale, family-friendly Villa del Arco Beach Resort & Spa's nightly agent rate is \$109. At both properties, rates cover accommodations in a deluxe guest suite and are based on single or

double occupancy. Meal plan options are \$66 per person daily.

The distinctive 156-suite Villa La Estancia is known for its ultra-spacious accommodations with generous amenities, gourmet cuisine and unrivaled hospitality.

Villa del Arco offers 231 deluxe oceanfront one-, two- and three-bedroom suites with full kitchens, plus deluxe studios. All deluxe studios feature a terrace.

Available through December 20, 2007, all The Villa Group travel agent rates are subject to a 10 percent service fee and 13 percent room tax (Cabo San Lucas) or 17 percent room tax (Puerto Vallarta and Nuevo Vallarta). One- and two-bedroom suites are available at 50 percent off rack rates, European Plan. Agents must present a business card upon check-in. Reservations are subject to space and holidays are excluded.

The Villa Group, 877-845-5247, www.TheVillaGroup.com

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