

Enjoy the Magic of Christmas in Germany

Though a visit during the Christmas Season is truly magical, a trip to Germany is special any time of the year.

JENNIFER M. LANE

At the end of November, city centers throughout Germany are being transformed into beautiful Christmas markets. Whereas the first markets back in the 14th century lasted only a few days, today they usually begin around the last week of November and can be visited until Christmas Eve or even a few days longer. Giant Christmas trees and decorated booths stocked with hand-crafted gifts such as incense burners, wooden nutcrackers, toys and Nativity scenes invite visitors to enjoy the magic of Christmas in Germany. The aromas of roasted almonds and chestnuts, the famous Lebkuchen (gingerbread), grilled sausages and Glühwein (hot mulled wine) add to the romantic atmosphere of Germany's over 2,500 Christmas markets.

Berlin is a fairytale in lights at Christmas. With more than 50 traditional Christmas markets, cultural events, atmospheric concerts, and endless shopping opportunities, Berlin offers something for everyone.

The Striezelmarkt, Dresden's famous Christmas market, was mentioned in the chronicles for the first time in 1434. Today, it is home to the world's largest Christmas pyramid and the traditional baking of the city's popular Christmas cake, the Christstollen.

Frankfurt's Christmas market, one of the oldest (first mentioned in 1393) and prettiest in Germany, attracts more than three million visitors every year from all over the world. 200 stalls offer arts and crafts and festive food and drink.

Beautifully presented and illuminated stalls transform the city center of Stuttgart into one of the largest and most attractive Christmas markets in Europe. The backdrop of the Old Castle, the collegiate church, and the baroque grounds of the New Palace creates a truly unique setting.

The ever-popular Christkindlesmarkt in Nuremberg welcomes visitors to take in the medieval atmosphere and delicious aromas of gingerbread, Bratwurst, roasted almonds and Glühwein (hot mulled wine).

Munich's traditional Christmas market, with roots going back to the 14th century, is held on Marienplatz square. The



Erfurt: Christmas market, cathedral and Church of St. Severus.

Kripperlmarkt (specializing in Nativity scenes) and alpine Christmas music, sung live on the town hall balcony, are the highlights of the Christmas festivities in Bavaria's capital.

In Germany's Christmas markets, guests can take home the special atmosphere: Christmas decorations, spices, Glühwein and many more regional traditions, and specialties can be bought and serve as perfect souvenirs. Käthe Wohlfahrt is a specialized company that offers the Christmas experience throughout the whole year in the charming town of Rothenburg ob der Tauber in Bavaria. Here visitors can shop for artistic Christmas decorations and gift ideas in the unique "Christmas Village" – a Franconian indoor marketplace with some 30,000 Christmas items for sale. From high-quality pyramids, handmade incense smokers and nutcrackers to Christmas tree ornaments – this store is a one-of-a-kind shopping experience. Rare decorations, Advent calendars, Christmas postcards, nutcrackers and Nativity scenes are on display in the German Christmas Museum – also located inside the "Christmas Village" shop.

Special promotion – Christmas Delight

Let your clients experience the special Christmas Delight of

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CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY FROM PAGE 37

Germany's famed Christmas markets with Nordique Tours on two departure dates (December 2 and 6), priced at \$969 ppdo for five nights and six days of shopping and sightseeing. Travel agents earn 15 percent commission on all reservations made and paid in full from September 1 through October 31. For information call Nordique Tours' reservation department at 800-995-7997 and ask for the Christmas Delight package.

Anytime is a Great Time to Visit Germany

Once the new year has been greeted with fireworks in all major cities and quaint towns, carnival celebrations are approaching. At the end of February, the season will be concluded with parties and colorful parades in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz – being the epicenter for the Rheinische Karneval. In southwestern Germany, people celebrate the Alemannic carnival, which has its roots in pagan beliefs. Ghosts and demons are intimidated with scary wooden masks, fire, and the noise of pipes and drums.

Year-round, Germany's event calendar is brimming with high-quality concerts, world-class exhibitions, regional wine festivals and fairs. In 2009, celebrations will take place throughout Germany on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. Obviously, the biggest events and most comprehensive exhibitions can be seen in Berlin where several remnants of the wall still stand to commemorate the city's 28-year long division by the wall. Well-marked trails can be followed on foot or by bike, and combine important memorials, museums, former checkpoints, documentation centers and open-air exhibitions.

Just 180 miles south of Berlin, the revolution in design began in the city of Weimar in 1919 when Walter Gropius founded the "Staatliches Bauhaus." The region around Weimar, Jena and Erfurt will be the focus of the anniversary celebrations in 2009 with a series of exhibitions and quality events.

Visitors will be thrilled about Germany's castles and palaces that are all original. There is not just a handful of well-preserved ones, but several thousands from all epochs and of every genre. They sit on hilltops in mountainous regions, are surrounded by water on the northern plains, or stand majestically next to modern architecture in city centers. Most of them have beautiful parks and gardens, and some even received UNESCO World Heritage status. Many of them host museums, concerts, medieval festivals, wedding celebrations, and other special events. Others have been converted into beautiful five-star hotels, unique bed and breakfasts, or fun youth hostels. Take a trip along Germany's Castle Road between Mannheim and Bayreuth to experience some of the 70 impressive castles, palaces and gardens along the route. Or follow Germany's most famous scenic drive, the Romantic Road. Highlights include medieval Rothenburg, the Rococo



Rothenburg ob der Tauber: Christmas market with pretty lights.



Munich: Christmas market by the City Hall.

Wieskirche Pilgrimage Church and, of course, world-famous Neuschwanstein Castle.

For the more adventurous traveler, Germany boasts unique opportunities to go canyoning, rafting, downhill skiing or snowboarding; just to name a few. Nature lover will enjoy long sandy beaches on the coasts and lake shores, enchanting lowland plains, extensive ranges of hills, and the high peaks of the Alps. Whether your clients are looking for leisurely exploration, a spa or wellness break, or a sports activity on land, on water or in the air, they'll be amazed at what Germany's natural landscapes have to offer. From hiking activities along tidal shores to trips through the low mountain regions all the way to mountain-top tours, everything is possible.

Germany, 800-637-1171, www.cometogermany.com

Doorways Ltd. – The International Villa Rental Company with a Personal Touch

Entice that sophisticated traveler to do something they have not done before. The villa rental business is a strong trend in travel today, an expanding niche market that has yet to be fully exploited by travel agents.

NANCY MARCANTONIO

At the current time, a European vacation doesn't seem like a financially sound idea. Hotel and restaurant costs in Europe reflect the dollar's plummeting buying power. But hold on, there's a way around the problem. Italy is affordable for the whole family when the client opts for a villa rental.

From cottage to castle

Doorways Ltd. is an international villa rental company with a personal touch. The owner, Kit Burns, is a former travel agent who is sensitive to and respectful of the importance of the travel agent to the villa rental process. Ms. Burns works closely with agents to fulfill the requirements for each individual client, making Doorways, Ltd. an essential step in the process of booking a villa vacation. She has taken years to source out inventory and to provide local people in every location who act as concierges to set up everything from food tours to tastings. With an inventory of more than 450 properties in Europe, 75% in Italy alone, all properties are consistently vetted and reviewed by local staff.

Call the concierge

Doorways, Ltd. can provide entirely individualized arrangements for your clients with particular needs. Representing the owners of properties in destinations around the globe, their inventory can accommodate any budget from cottage to castle. Through a network of wealthy, noble owners who know each other, their inventory is constantly growing thanks to owner recommendations.

The largest inventory is in Italy, and their largest audience is families where two or three generations can holiday together on one large property. With a local English/Italian



The Villa Buonvisi, is perched high on a Tuscan hillside overlooking miles of olive groves and vineyards.

speaking staff, Doorways can arrange cultural tours, drivers, wine tours and tastings (with one's own oenologist along for the day if desired), private chefs, opera tickets, dinner reservations, even a home cooking lesson with a Neapolitan pizza chef.

Upscale clients are particularly anxious to do a private villa rental. CEO's to movie stars have looked to Doorways to make dinner reservations in advance or on the spot. A famous chef in Chianti is often booked to cook for clients Zubin Mehta (musical director of the Florence Symphony Orchestra), Vladimir Putin, who returns regularly, and Sting, who lives nearby. Members of the Italian Travel Promotion Council, Doorways is connected to every tourist office in Italy, and can therefore provide extraordinary services.

The agent is always in the process

20% of Doorways, Ltd.'s business is done through travel

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DOORWAYS LTD. FROM PAGE 39

agents. Once a client comes to an agent to arrange a private villa stay, Doorways, Ltd. will formulate and book the entire process. The company will work directly with you or with your client and the agent is never cut out of the process. All commissions are shown on their website and range from 10% on any villa booking for over \$2000.00 a week, to 5% for properties under that amount. In some particular cases, commission can go as high as 15%. Doorways can do literally all the work and you make the commission. Should your client come directly to Doorways, Ltd. in the future, the agent is always sent their commission. On the other side of the process, Doorways, Ltd. works with property owners providing feedback if there is something they need to do to upgrade for the American client. The goal is to create the perfect match.

Dini does it all

Joe Dini and his wife, Gianna, are the owners of Villa Buonvisi, a 500 year old property built by silk merchants near the town of Lucca. There are actually three villas on the property, the largest of which is Villa Buonvisi with ten bedrooms, nine of which have private bathrooms en suite. One of the oldest villas in the area, it was originally restored in the 18th century and today provides wireless internet connection, plasma television, and a swimming pool set in a lush garden.

A party of up to 40 people can be accommodated on this property if Villa Barbaro and Villa Cardinale are taken as well. A magical place lush with olive groves and miles of vineyards of varietals from the Sangiovese grape, the vineyard produces Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Trebbiano, and Pinot Noir. From the hundreds of olive trees, Mr. Dini presses and bottles his own olive oil.

Tying the knot in Tuscany

Attention to the needs of the niche travel market today is a sure way for agents to maintain a strong presence in the industry. Destination weddings play out to perfection in Italy, the land of Romeo and Juliet, and Doorways, Ltd. can play an essential role. Now that it has become common for U.S. college students to study abroad, many of them go to Italian universities. So when the time is right to say "I do," many choose to tie the knot amid the vines, wines, and olive trees of Tuscany. And everyone in the bridal party benefits from the choice.

This Spring, Nicole and Chris Spence were married at Villa Buonvisi. The wedding party came from around the world, San Francisco, New York, Australia, and Britain, booked the entire property, and celebrated in the gardens. Doorways, Ltd. orchestrated the entire wedding from rehearsal dinner through the reception. "Ask them anything," they say, and they will surely accommodate.

Doorways, Ltd., www.villavacations.com



The gardens and swimming pool at Villa Buonvisi, an ancient and noble villa available to rent through Doorways, Ltd.

CEIBA DEL MAR ANNOUNCES GOLF AND SPA PACKAGE

Ceiba del Mar is offering a Golf and Spa Fourth Night Free Package, which includes everything golf-lovers will need to enjoy a relaxing getaway including five-days/four-nights in selected luxury ocean view accommodations, with the fourth night complimentary; one round of golf at Jack Nicklaus Golf Course, including round transportation, green fee, golf cart and soft drinks; two 60-minute massages per stay to choose from the spa menu; one romantic dinner for two accompanied by a bottle of wine in the beach front 'Arrecifes' Restaurant, the Pier or in the privacy of your room; daily breakfast ala carte for two; 20 percent discount on additional spa treatment(s); access to spa facilities including sauna, steam room, Swiss shower and gym for the entire stay; private transportation to and from the airport; free wireless Internet access in-room; in-suite organic bath amenities; and complimentary "eye-opener" delivered to your room each morning, including coffee or tea and selection of whole grain sweet rolls.

The Golf and Spa Fourth Night Free Package starts at \$1,539 per couple, plus taxes (12 percent) and additional service charges (five percent), based on double occupancy. Additional nights are available, but a minimum four-night stay applies.

Ceiba Del Mar Beach & Spa Resort, www.ceibadelmar.com

LALUNA SPA AND WELLNESS CENTER WILL OPEN DECEMBER 14

Yoga innovator Neo Moreton and hotel owner Bernardo Bertucci have teamed up to offer a very unique Eco-chic yoga retreat at Laluna. The new Spa & Wellness Center is set to open December 14, 2008.

A seven-night "Blissful Body & Soul" Package for two includes accommodation for two in a Deluxe Cottage with private plunge pool; daily breakfast, lunch and dinner; wellness consultation; daily yoga/mediation sessions; one spa service of choice per person per day; return airport transfers; yoga book; and unique Laluna gift. Rates are \$9,124 December 14, 2008 to April 21, 2009; \$7,416 April 22 to June 14, 2009; \$6,305 June 15 to September 30, 2009; and \$7,416 October 1 to December 14, 2009. Package exclusive of 18 percent tax and service charge
Laluna, 866-4-Laluna, www.laluna.com

INTRODUCING AURIGA, THE NEXT GENERATION IN SPAS

Auriga is emerging as a compelling new spa brand on the global scene. Spas have already opened in Austria and Ireland, and will debut in Mexico and Singapore by the end of 2008 and first quarter of 2009, establishing the Auriga brand worldwide.

Each spa combines a superior physical product with an exceptional level of service, the highest quality ingredients and innovative programs for an experience that transforms, revives and restores balance with nature's elements.

A hallmark of the Auriga experience is its selection of four signature treatments that are offered throughout the brand and reflect the varying energies of the lunar cycle. By tapping into the natural rhythms of the heavens, the treatments work to realign mind, body and spirit to achieve greater equilibrium with nature.

"The moon phases have significance in nearly every culture around the world," says Scott Rohm, Senior Vice President of Operations. "No matter where an Auriga is located, people will be able to relate to these core treatments."

While guests can expect the same standards of excellence and signature treatments at all Auriga locations, each spa is a unique reflection of its location and the people, culture and traditions it represents. Regional customs, indigenous products and authentic healing practices all come into play through the architecture, interior design, treatments, programs, products and service.

"There is no standard design to an Auriga, so each is a new adventure for our guests," says Rohm. "For instance, the Auriga at Schloss Velden features a therapeutic snow room that reflects its Austrian alpine setting. At Capella Pedregal in Cabo San Lucas, guests will be able to seek the counsel of an authentic curandera in a healer's cottage for treatments and rituals based on local folk healing traditions."

Auriga collaborated with two renowned spa consultants, Raison d'Etre and Sylvia Sepielli, to develop the concept. Auriga, www.auriga-spa.com

FORUM OF HEALERS AND CULTURAL FAIR 2008

EcoTulum Resorts & Spa will be holding its Third Forum of Healers from October 11 - 15, 2008, for a chance to nurture mind, body, and spirit. The event will feature free lectures with renowned healers and shamans, and include free daily yoga and sunrise Tai Chi as well as a full moon ceremony, a Temazcal ceremony (similar to a Native American Sweat Lodge), fire dancing, drumming, and performance art. Healers invited will also be giving individ-

ual therapy sessions for those interested in a more personal approach.

Guests will be staying in accommodations amidst the Yucatan jungle, in a natural environment that offers holistic Mayan spa services, 32 miles of beach, and a wide range of open-air activities.

Healers attending are trained in wellness therapies and techniques.

EcoTulum Resorts & Spa, www.ecotulum.com, www.maya-spa.com; Forum of Healers, www.forumofhealers.com

www.come.to.germany.com/spedoffers




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ENJOY PERRYGOLF'S 2009 BRITISH OPEN BY SEA GOLF CRUISE

The 105-passenger *MS Andrea* is PerryGolf's latest addition to the vessels now part of an expanded list of golf and lifestyle cruise offerings. Extensively renovated in 2003, the *MSAndrea* provides guests the privacy of a personal yacht and the cruising flexibility often lacking in larger ships.

PerryGolf will introduce a new vessel to its small ship luxury golf cruise options for the 2009 British Open by Sea, which starts at the home of golf and concludes at Turnberry, site of the 138th Open Championship.

PerryGolf's exclusive charter of the *MS Andrea*, a 105-passenger expedition-style ship, begins in St. Andrews with golf at Kingsbarns and sightseeing in the town and continues with golf at Royal Aberdeen, Royal Dornoch, Machrihanish and David McLay Kidd's new design, Machrihanish Dunes, before moving on to Turnberry for



Kingsbarns Golf Links.

the final round of the Open Championship at the Ailsa course.

"With the sea by your side, that famous lighthouse in the distance and all that Open history, there are few places in the world that can match Turnberry for beauty or excitement," said PerryGolf President Gordon Dalgleish.

Among the tour's highlights for golfers will be the opportunity to play Machrihanish and Machrihanish Dunes on the opposite side of the River Clyde from Turnberry. Machrihanish Dunes is the first true links course built on Scotland's west coast in more than 100 years.

Previously a challenging location to reach, Machrihanish is now accessible via a 60-minute trip on a Kintyre Express ocean taxi. PerryGolf is also offering access to the Ailsa Course on the day it officially reopens following the final round of the Open Championship.

PerryGolf's 2009 British Open by Sea golf cruise, July 11-20, 2009, is priced from \$7,995 to \$9,395 and features an extensive touring schedule.

The tour is part of the expanded Golf Cruising by PerryGolf program recently announced. The schedule includes 17 cruises in 2008 – 2009 to golf destinations as diverse as Scotland, South Africa, France and the Mediterranean.

PerryGolf, 800-344-5257,
Information@PerryGolf.com,
www.perrygolf.com

TCS EXPEDITIONS INTRODUCES THE WORLD IN TWO WEEKS

In 2009, the private jet travel operator TCS Expeditions will make it even easier for busy travelers by introducing two-week world expeditions.

The 14-day "World Highlights by Private Jet" combines life-list destinations, such as Jerusalem, Prague and St. Petersburg, Russia with exotic locales like Fez, Morocco; Cappadocia, Turkey; and Tallinn, Estonia. The private jet operator will also streamline travelers' time by giving them options.

Travelers can customize their visits in four of the six destinations.

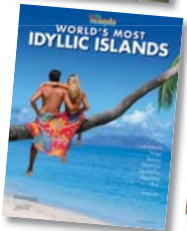
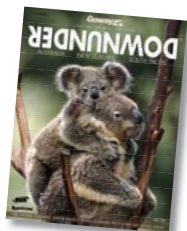
The 14-day itinerary is packed with cultural revelations. Among the possible options are a medieval concert in Tallinn; exclusive tours of the State Hermitage Museum and Catharine's Palace in St. Petersburg; and witnessing a whirling dervishes ritual in Cappadocia. Local guides and expert lecturers help put all these destinations into a broader context and introduce guests to iconic monuments, such as the Western Wall in Jerusalem, the mosques of Fez and Prague Castle.

And for those travelers who experience separation anxiety from work, each jet seat is fitted with power outlets for charging laptops and cell phones.

TCS Expeditions, 206-727-7300,
www.tcs-expeditions.com

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RAIL EUROPE ROLLS OUT ELECTRONIC TICKETING ON EUROSTAR

Rail Europe offers the ease and convenience of e-ticketing for all Eurostar fares, with the exception of group fares, between London and Paris. The new e-ticket system means a quicker, more seamless check in for North American business and leisure travelers, as they can now take full advantage of Eurostar's fast 30 minute check-in times.

Rail Europe first began offering electronic tickets through its Contact Center earlier in 2008 and by the end of this year e-ticketing will be available on their website and across all of Rail Europe's booking channels. The rail industry is moving towards electronic ticketing and Rail Europe is at the forefront having already introduced it for rail travel throughout France with its innovative new rail product Anywhere Anytime France. The latest move to provide e-ticketing for Eurostar demonstrates Rail Europe's commitment to making booking rail as easy and efficient as possible. The more cost efficient e-tickets not only allow for more flexibility and last minute bookings, but also eliminate the risk of lost tickets.

Thanks to the ease and convenience of e-ticketing, travelers can pre-purchase through Rail Europe, then pick up their Eurostar tickets at the self-service ticket kiosks located at the Eurostar Stations in London or Paris.

Rail Europe, 888-382-7245, www.raileurope.com

GOWAY OFFERS NEW AUSTRALIA LUXURY RAIL CRUISE

Goway has announced a new luxurious train service called 'The Southern Spirit' that will operate each summer season from November 2008 on a variety of outback Australian train routes.

The Southern Spirit will be a luxury Australian rail cruise offering eight different itineraries that visit a number of different destinations across Australia's rail network, combined with deluxe excursions and exclusive events. The Inaugural journey departs Darwin on November 25, 2008 bound for Sydney on a 13-day/12-night rail cruise across the heart of Australia. It will travel through the Red Centre to the scenic south-east corner, with stopovers in Katherine, Alice Springs, Cooper Pedy, Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Moss Vale. Each unique journey on board the Southern Spirit will take guests through some of the most breathtaking scenery Australia has to offer. The transcontinental journeys are combined with a suite of deluxe excursions staying at five-star hotels, together with once in a lifetime exclusive events at stops along the way.

Great Southern Rail, Chief Executive Officer Tony Braxton-Smith said, "The Southern Spirit is not only a new Australian train journey with a fantastic array of destinations and experiences, it sets a completely new standard of deluxe rail travel in Australia."

Goway, 800-387-8850, Goway.com

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Louis Cruise Lines welcomes travelers to the Mediterranean for an unparalleled experience of enjoyment and discovery. Imaginative itineraries, quality services and 74 years of tradition are the trademark of the company.

On board the small to mid-sized cruise ships, guests will find a casual and friendly atmosphere, warm Greek hospitality and attentive service. Celebrated for their classic style and intimate atmosphere, these vessels transport passengers, both literally and figuratively, to the lands of philosophers and dreamers.

Louis Cruise Lines takes extra care to design itineraries that include the best ports in their best seasons with time for travelers to explore on their own, or join in on one of the meticulously planned shore excursions.

With Louis Cruise Lines, passengers can experience the splendor of the Greek Isles, the romance of Italy, the sophistication of the French Riviera, the cosmopolitan bustle of the West Mediterranean islands, the lively pulse of Spanish port cities, the intricate mystery of North Africa's medina citadels, and the eternal spring of Madeira and the Canary Islands.

The principal aim of Louis Cruise Lines is to always deliver the highest standards in service, safety, comfort and value. Its fleet of destination-friendly cruise ships is also a statement of the company's commitment to maintain a human scale in cruising and an excellence for each traveler's experience.

With an optimum size for the Mediterranean, Louis Cruise Lines' ships are able to enter the smaller island ports with the added flexibility that affords travelers even more time at each distinctive port of call.

While the majority of their passengers are seasoned travelers and have sailed on larger cruise ships, Louis Cruise Lines is also ideal for first time cruisers that may experience the Greek Islands as an extension to their comprehensive air/land tour package of Athens and the classical sites of mainland Greece.

Louis Cruise Lines, 877-LouisUS, LCLUSA@louiscruises.com, www.louiscruises.com

VARIETY CRUISES ANNOUNCES PREFERRED PARTNERSHIP WITH TODD TRAVEL PROMOTIONS

Variety Cruises, one of the world's largest small ships cruise companies, announced that it has partnered with Todd Travel Promotions (TTP), the leading provider of travel supplier sales materials in the U.S.

"We very excited about our partnership with Todd Travel Promotions. Beginning August 4, travel agents will be able to order our new Variety Cruises brochure from Todd Travel Promotions' InfoCentre at www.ordericworld.com," said Dave Randon, VP Sales and Marketing, Variety Cruises.

TTP's InfoCentre program provides U.S. agents with one-source to order sales and promotional materials from cruise lines and other travel suppliers.

Variety Cruises offers premium cruises in a casually sophisticated, yacht-like atmosphere to well-known destinations as well as smaller ports at an accessible price point. Guests enjoy flexible itineraries, journeys to off the beaten path locations, fun in the water, fine cuisine, and the rare opportunity to experience old world culture and history in the utmost comfort and style.

Variety Cruises is a USTOA allied member, a preferred supplier with Vacation.com, TRAVELSAVERS, and a member of NACTA and OSSN.

Variety Cruises, 800-319-7776, www.varietycruises.com

SAILTIME LAUNCHES SAILTIME PLUS

The SailTime Group LLC has announced the launch of a new program – SailTime Plus, which allows members from one base to access boats at SailTime bases worldwide. With more than 50 base locations in both North America and Europe, the largest of any fractional membership program, SailTime's members now have access to luxury boats on a global basis, without the obligation or cost of ownership. Members can reserve boats at other bases days or weeks in advance based on their travel schedule.

"Those traveling for business can now entertain and market clients on a luxury yacht, while those on vacation can enjoy time on the water and an unparalleled family vacation experience," adds SailTime founder George Bonelli. "With our partnership with Hunter Boats in the U.S. and Beneteau in Europe, members now have access to a fleet of 160 plus top-of-the-line, luxury sailboats in premiere waterfront locations in North America, Canada, Puerto Rico, the United Kingdom, Ireland and the Netherlands."

Members who sign up for SailTime Plus can take advantage of up to seven days of sailing at each desired location, depending on boat availability. These times do not count against their regular monthly sail time allotment. Reservations can be made up to 60 days in advance of travel. Prices vary per base but are significantly lower than charter or sailing club fees. Members can also reserve different boats at their home base, or larger boats, as long as they complete the appropriate additional training required for each vessel. SailTime, www.sailtime.com

BRUCE NIERENBERG JOINS ORIENT LINES AS EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



BRUCE NIERENBERG

Bruce Nierenberg has been appointed Executive Vice President of Orient Lines effective immediately.

The announcement was made by Wayne Heller, the line's President and CEO. Nierenberg will have direct responsibility for worldwide marketing and sales, and will oversee product development.

A recognized leader in the cruise industry, Nierenberg is credited with numerous product and marketing innovations that remain staples of the cruise industry today, including the first mega ship – SS Norway; the first "out" island – Great Stirrup Cay; the first nationwide air/sea program; and the first computerized reservations system, all while at Norwegian Cruise Line (née Norwegian Caribbean Line).

At SeaEscape he introduced the "cruise-to-nowhere," and as founder of Premier Cruise Lines created the first cruise-tour packages with Disney World.

"Bruce Nierenberg is uniquely qualified and highly regarded for his achievements and creativity," said Heller. "We look forward to him playing a major leadership role in guiding Orient Lines towards growth and continued success in the years ahead."

Over the past few years Nierenberg has been a consultant on a number of projects.

Prior senior management posts include serving as President at Delta Queen Steamboat Company from 2003 to 2006, President and CEO of Costa and American Family cruise lines from 1992 to 1994, and founder and partner of Premier Cruise Lines from 1983 to 1991.

Nierenberg began his career in 1973 and has previously held positions as Executive Vice President; Vice President of Marketing, Sales and Passenger Service; Director of Marketing and Director of Sales.

"My career has been challenging and extremely rewarding," said Nierenberg.

"It is most gratifying to join a company which I hold in high esteem and I look forward to working with the Hellers to maintain Orient Lines' award-winning reputation as the destination cruise specialists."

Orient Lines, 800-333-7300, www.orientlines.com

STAR CLIPPERS OFFERS FREE AIR TO TAHITI FROM L.A.

Star Clippers is offering guests free round-trip air travel to Tahiti from Los Angeles, California on several departures in 2008 and 2009.

Eligible departure dates for the seven-night cruise with complimentary airfare are December 7 and 14, 2008, and 2009 sailings

include January 18, March 8 and 22, April 5, May 10, June 21, July 5 and August 9.

Fares for the seven-night itinerary begin at \$2,045 pppo.

The 10-night cruises with complimentary airfare depart April 23, June 11, July 23 and September 3, 2009.

The fares for the 10-night sailings begin at \$3,175 pppo.

Reservations must be made before November 30, 2008, and port charges, air tax and a fuel surcharge are additional.

Star Flyer sails year-round from Papeete, Tahiti, where guests experience a sailing adventure to some of the most spectacular sites in the world.

Onboard, guests enjoy all the amenities and activities of a private yacht, and shore excursions explore the fascinating culture and history of the Polynesian people.

The seven-night itinerary calls at Huahine, Raiatea, Taha'a, Bora Bora, and Cook Bay and Opunohu Bay, Moorea, with an overnight in Papeete before disembarkation.

The 10-night cruise takes Star Flyer to the Society Islands and Tuamotu Atolls, with special cruising in the Rangiroa Lagoon.

The ship calls at Fakarava, Rangiroa, Bora Bora, Raiatea, Taha'a, Huahine and Moorea.

Star Clippers, 800-442-0556, brochures@starclippers.com, www.starclippers.com

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SUNSET HOUSE CELEBRATES WITH FALL FANTASEA SPECIAL

Sunset House in Grand Cayman is celebrating its 50th anniversary this fall with a Fall Fantasea Special from September 1 until October 31, 2008. Fall is a great time to visit the island, since the corals are spawning. The Fall Fantasea Special has both discounted room and dive. To ease the fear of hurricane season, Sunset House as always, has their Hurricane Protection Policy.

Travelers can save on room and diving with prices beginning at \$895 ppdo (court-yard, minimum five night stay). Package includes accommodations, boat diving, unlimited shore diving, daily breakfast, welcome rum punch, free gift, all tax and service. Sunset House is an inviting getaway in one of the most beautiful locations in the West Indies. Sunset House is a charming family-owned 54 room resort, one mile away from George Town. The resort is home to some of the island's best food at the

SeaHarvest restaurant, the famous thatched-roof outdoor bar, My Bar, the award winning Sunset Divers crew and to the famed Cathy Church's Underwater Photo Gallery.

Sunset House, 800-854-4767, reservations@sunsethouse.com, www.sunsethouse.com

FAMILY LEARN TO DIVE PROGRAM AT TRUE BLUE BAY, GRENADA

A family holiday and learn to dive on the spice island of Grenada. Discover the wonders of the world's first ever Underwater Sculpture Park created by Jason de Caires Taylor who is using sculptures to create artificial reefs to protect and develop Grenada's underwater world. A seven-night Discover Scuba package at the family-friendly, boutique True Blue Bay includes seven nights accommodation with buffet breakfast. The Scuba package includes short theory introduction, one pool session and one guided dive at the Sculpture Park

at \$677.20 per person, in a standard room or upgrade to a True Blue Villa Home, with two bedrooms, accommodating four people for \$800 per person. Minimum dive age 10. All rooms have self catering facilities. True Blue Bay, info@truebluebay.com

WYNDHAM COZUMEL AND SAND DOLLAR SPORTS AT OCTOBERFEST

The Wyndham Cozumel Resort and Spa and Sand Dollar Sports invite divers to join them at Octoberfest 2008. The annual dive event gives divers the chance to explore Cozumel's reefs and marine life while enjoying a number of fun and exciting activities including tours, shows, parties and contests each evening. This year's Octoberfest celebration will take place in Cozumel on October 4 - 11, 2008.

Created in 2003 by Wyndham Cozumel Resort and Spa (formerly the Reef Club) and Sand Dollar Sports as an end of year dive extravaganza celebrating the world-renowned reefs of Cozumel, Octoberfest takes place annually and provides the perfect opportunity for divers to discover Cozumel's underwater scene. Considered to have some of the best diving in the world, Cozumel is home to the largest reef system in the Western hemisphere.

Wyndham Cozumel Resort and Spa is providing special package rates for the Octoberfest. Guests can enjoy a seven-night package with five days of diving starting at \$980 ppdo with stay in Caribbean Room. Divers can also choose to stay at the adults-only Sabor area at the Wyndham Cozumel Resort and receive a seven-night package with five days of diving starting at \$1,219 ppdo. Each package includes seven-night accommodations, entry to all Octoberfest events and activities, meals and beverages, five days of two-tank morning or afternoon dives provided by Sand Dollar Sports, a Candle Auriculotherapy treatment at the Islander Spa, photography seminars, taxes and tips. Offer is valid for stays during October 4 - 11, 2008.

The Wyndham Cozumel Resort and Spa, 888-293-0293, www.wyndhamcozumel.com

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EXCLUSIVE ART & DESIGN ITINERARIES IN LATIN AMERICA FROM BLUE PARALLEL



Building on their success as the top elite travel boutique showcasing the best of authentic Latin America travel, Blue Parallel has unveiled a host of exclusive art itineraries throughout Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. Designed exclusively for upscale art enthusiasts wishing to experience today's most significant historical and contemporary art movements of key Latin American cultural centers, the following Blue Parallel offerings can be further individually tailored to suit client needs and interests.

All the trips include signature Blue Parallel expert advice and exclusive access to area artists, galleries and cultural hubs, as well as unrivalled knowledge, exclusive travel services and amenities including sumptuous dining and luxurious accommodation, all adding up to turn-key indulgences that make the most of discerning clients' limited time and valuable travel dollars.

The four-day Buenos Aires Art Submersion provides exclusive access to the most important art collections in B.A. today, from Concrete Art and Abstractionism to Neo Figuration.

The Sao Paulo & Rio de Janeiro Art Immersion, varying in length according to client interest and the availability of collectors and directors, works in tandem with noted Argentine art collector, graphic designer, professor, and multimedia artist Miguel Frias on this particular in-depth art tour.

On the Ecuadorian Art Immersion, guests will enjoy a host of colonial treasures showcasing art and architecture.

While in Peru on the Peruvian Art Immersion, guests will enjoy exclusive private access to the Enrico Poli museum in Lima.

Blue Parallel, 800-256-5307, www.blueparallel.com

PEDALERS PUB & GRILLE OFFERS NEW "JOURNEY TO SAPA" VIETNAM ITINERARY

Pedalers Pub & Grille (PP&G), puts cyclists to the test on its new "Vietnam: Journey to Sapa" cycling adventure with three scheduled departures in the coming year. This challenging journey takes in the northeastern mountains and some of Vietnam's most alluring scenery and cultures. Departing on December 8, 2008, March 9, and December 7 2009, the 10-day trip is the only excursion that actually pedals the quiet back roads to Sapa; most other visitors arrive by air or train.

Sensitive to the area's cultural diversity, company founder Tom Sheehan says that each departure will take in different villages en route to Sapa. "We don't plan to visit the same community more than once a year, so that the indigenous hill tribes stay as unaffected by tourism as possible. This also gives us the opportunity to distribute school materials to children who could otherwise not afford them."

This trip will also focus on Hanoi's ancient past and the more recent French influence in the colonial architecture.

Except for international air, the program is all-inclusive at \$2,250 ppdo (single supplement is \$425). The rate includes accommodations, meals, guides, van support, daily route directions and maps, sightseeing and cultural activities, plus airport transfers.

Pedalers Pub & Grille, tours@pedalerspubandgrille.com, www.pedalerspubandgrille.com

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