

Spring 2016

## *In This Issue:*

*Founded 1981...our 35th year*

Live like a king and queen at *Ireland's Ashford Castle*

*The Milestone Hotel* in *London* deserves its 5 stars...and more

*Le Bristol* for celebrated luxury in *Paris*

*Park Hyatt Vienna*: imperial splendor and a restaurant fit for an emperor

Consider *Slovenia* for European history, charm, castles and culture

We never travel without *Archipelago Botanicals Vienna's Hotel Sacher*: perfect regal harmony

*MedCenter Traveler* to manage medications and health on the road

Cruising the *Rhine* with *AmaWaterways*

Touring *Portugal* with *Small Luxury Hotels of the World*

The iconic *Grand Hotel Tremezzo* in the heart of *Lake Como*

*The Allison Inn & Spa*: sanctuary in *Oregon's Willamette Valley*

*Nobu Las Vegas* ranks as one of the greatest Hot type: books you must consider

Wines that made a lasting impression on us  
Idiotic hotel decisions...and some very good ones

**I**N THIS BIG WIDE WORLD, THERE ARE CASTLES. MANY OF THEM. AND THEN there are Castles. Around the globe, it's not uncommon for hotels to label themselves as castles without being truly deserving of the word. *Ashford Castle* is not one of these hotels: this imposing property is as castle-like as it gets, from the sweeping manicured lawns, to the authentic suit of armor greeting guests in the foyer, to the turreted towers. But cascading over all this grandeur is a sense of the warmest Irish hospitality one will ever know.

Ashford Castle has been around since 1228 when the Anglo-Norman de Burgo family first built a castle on this location and then lost it after being defeated by the O'Connors in the 16th century. It is a stunning pile of dramatic limestone, part French-style chateau from 1715 and part Victorian dating from 1852. The castle sits on a 350-acre estate with a stunning lakefront location on picturesque Lough Corrib.

And its sprawling estate grounds allow for practically every activity, including falconry, clay pigeon shooting, fishing, horseback riding, and even golf. The wooded trails for hiking and walking are splendid beside the lake or a meandering river filled with jumping fish.



The interior common spaces are as splendid as the exterior. The lobby, drawing room, and aptly labeled Oak Hall have rich wood paneling from the 18th century; oil paintings, chandeliers, and fireplaces can be found throughout and stunning vistas of the lake can be enjoyed from many rooms.



Despite the size of the castle, there are only 83 rooms, which means the highest levels of service, and always that irrepressible cheery Irish happy service. Each of the rooms and suites at Ashford Castle represent traditional elegance and finesse. Following extensive refurbishment, many of the rooms and suites have been individually and lovingly designed, combining the castle's original features with the latest modern luxuries. Meticulous attention to detail can be found in the unique works of art, carefully sourced antique furniture and sumptuous fabrics with custom designed carpets, bespoke beds, feature lighting, exquisite toweling and Egyptian cotton bed linen.

The overall mood is grand but not too formal although jackets and ties are required in *George V Dining Room* at dinner, a very civilized place to dine like royalty. Ashford Castle has been hosting distinguished guests for almost 800 years—one of the most prominent being the Prince of Wales, who subsequently became George V of England. In honor of his visit in 1906, the Guinness family built a special dining room which still bears his name proudly to this day. The graceful setting, with rich, paneled walls and twinkling Waterford Crystal chandeliers bestows a grand sense of occasion. A resident pianist plays softly in the background while you relax and enjoy exceptional dishes from the kitchen of acclaimed Chef *Philippe Farineau*, combined with much loved recipes of Beatrice Tollman and complemented by a fine selection of wines from Restaurant and Wine Program Manager, *Robert Bowe*. Choose from dishes such as Slow Roasted Rib of Beef from the famous carving trolley, served with a homemade béarnaise sauce and a red wine and shallot jus. To end your meal an array of tempting desserts await including Nyangbo frozen chocolate mousse served with estate grown crab pear gel, chocolate cremeux, pear and vanilla sorbet and salted chocolate crisp.

Fine wines are a passion for the owners of Ashford Castle. You'd expect a terrific wine list to be a priority at a property of Ashford Castle's caliber, and you won't be disappointed when you look through the fabulous selection they've put together for the enjoyment of guests. *Robert Bowe*, who has been responsible for the wine cellars at Ashford Castle for the past 20 years, has witnessed the incredible development of wine in Ireland during this time. Today, with an impressive cellar of over 600 wines, Robert is particularly proud of the

selection of Irish wines featured, with Irishmen making wines in nearly every wine region in the world. The castle also proudly features wines from sister property *Bouchard Finlayson*, a South African vineyard producing some of the finest wines of the region.

In the mood for more casual dining? There's the dramatic and atmospheric *Dungeon*. As its name would suggest, the unique setting located on the lower ground floor of the castle invites diners to enjoy a range of satisfying dishes from a bistro-style menu with a focus on traditional Irish cuisine beneath the historic curved stone ceiling. Together with a relaxed atmosphere, it makes for a wonderful and memorable dining experience. This is one dungeon you wouldn't mind being sent to for life.

We also liked dining at *Cullen's at the Cottage*, the perfect seasonal setting. This traditional thatched cottage provides a warm and relaxed dining experience with international and local dishes inspired by the castle's owner, *Beatrice Tollman*. Open seasonally, it's just a short stroll over the bridge from the castle.



Another dining option is *Wilde's at The Lodge*, where fine Irish cuisine is served. Under the inspired direction of *Jonathan Keane*, recently described as “one of the country's most exciting chefs” and with many award nominations to his name, it has become a popular destination not just for local foodies but visitors from afar. Expect fine contemporary Irish cuisine in a stunning setting. Jonathan creates a variety of delicious dishes that showcase the unique flavors and textures of the finest local produce, from succulent Irish beef and lamb to fish and seafood fresh from the waters of Galway Bay and the Connemara coastline. The Lodge at Ashford Castle is a sister property located on the estate a short distance from the castle itself—either a 15-minute stroll or the hotel car can be easily arranged to whisk you there.



*The Wine Cellars* at Ashford Castle offer private wine tastings and wonderful wine dinners in the secret passageways of the castle, which were unearthed during recent renovations. The old servants' entrance was originally a coal bunker and walkway underneath the castle, where the servants used to come in and get their coal buckets to take up to the rooms. It has now been transformed and the 16th century tunnels provide three unique private spaces with a very cozy feel and inviting, soft lighting.

After a meal, retreat to the *Billiards Room* and enjoy a game of billiards, sink into comfy chairs with a glass of your favorite tippie or relax with a newspaper and catch up on the day's affairs. Open to residents only, the traditional elegance of the Billiards Room, with its grand assortment of antique furniture and furnishings is a most welcome addition to the castle.

Or head for *The Prince of Wales Bar* for refined traditional style. Built in the late 1800s, the bar is to this day reminiscent of its captivating past, with its opulent fabrics, polished wood paneling, traditional furnishings and original fireplace creating a warm and welcoming ambience—the perfect place to enjoy your favorite tippie or a pint of Guinness. In 1905 the bar was where the Prince of Wales took his brandy. Offering a full selection of cocktails, liqueurs and brandies, you, too, can sit back and relax and enjoy the finest Irish hospitality.



*The Drawing Room* allows guests to relax at leisure overlooking Lough Corrib. As you enter The Drawing Room you'll immediately be struck by the breathtaking views across the lawns out across the expansive Lough Corrib. The ideal setting for morning coffee, light lunches from the bar menu, and

Afternoon Tea, simply sink into comfortable chairs to enjoy fine hospitality in total comfort. Whether you're enjoying a romantic break, catching up with family and friends or hosting a relaxed meeting, The Drawing Room lends itself perfectly for the occasion.

Ashford's new spa has five treatment rooms and services using three different luxury product lines including the organic Irish brand Voya, a further example of Ashford Castle's commitment to using the finest local produce and suppliers. The space includes a bronze conservatory with a pool, three seashell chandeliers and an oak tree mural by the South African ceramic mosaic artist *Jane Du Rand*. An Awaken Your Senses at Ashford Castle Spa Package includes two nights' accommodations, daily breakfast, one dinner and either a facial or warmed spiced mud wrap at the spa, priced from \$795.

At Ashford, you can hike to your heart's content by the river or lake, swim, ride, golf, fish, cycle, play tennis, go clay shooting, kayaking, on a hawk walk or lake cruise, or just sit and dream surrounded by that pervasive green Irishness which is without comparison. There is even a sumptuous 32-seat cinema where special films are screened for guests, including of course the beloved *Quiet Man* movie.



Ashford Castle is an experience you owe yourself. It's not really worth going anywhere else in Ireland. Where else can you live like a king and queen for a few nights and fantasize about knights in shining armor. Ashford is much loved by all who stay there and work there. Everything is first rate and *Niall Rochford*, the eagle-eyed, well-dressed General Manager, effortlessly keeps it that way as he has for decades. Full marks to this extraordinary country estate you would love to own and call yours. In so far as you can see and sense all of Ireland from a hotel, you can witness it all totally from this rare place. Visit [www.ashfordcastle.com](http://www.ashfordcastle.com).

**F**OR OUR HARD-EARNED ENGLISH POUNDS IN *LONDON* WE MUCH PREFER *The Milestone Hotel* in bustling *Kensington*, where the fabrics are lavish, the art and furnishings museum quality, the staff fit for Buckingham Palace and the cooking as good as it gets. This five-star hotel, across the street from the palace where William, Kate and Harry live, is simply one of the world's best retreats for calm, sophisticated and luxurious comfort. Credit goes to the multi-talented *Beatrice Tollman*, President and Founder of the *Red Carnation Hotel Collection*, for making each guest room at The Milestone a work of art—a grand statement of color and style—adorned with rare fabrics, fresh fragrant flowers, antiques, and priceless artworks. No two rooms or suites are alike, yet each of the rooms, suites and apartments casts its own spell, some with wonderful views overlooking Kensington Palace and Gardens. Each room is an outstanding example of romantic elegance, comfort, and luxury, and yet each combines the latest 21st-century technology that one would expect from a mansion property of its caliber - with complimentary high-speed wireless internet and interactive TV with movies on demand. You'll find plenty of thoughtful touches such as home-made cookies, chilled mineral water, hand-picked seasonal fruits and complimentary newspapers to name a few. This is a hotel where they take your dog for a walk, the wine cellar has all the Bordeaux greats and the best of South Africa (including wines from sister



property and renowned vineyard *Bouchard Finlayson*), the staff are properly dressed and deliver a polished yet personal service, and the hotel car is a meticulously maintained dark blue Bentley. You will be treated like royalty at The Milestone. Family-owned and operated, naturally it is full of well-dressed



regulars whose tastes and special requests are met with unerring grace. The building itself is a Grade II listed mansion with 44 deluxe guest rooms and 12 luxury suites. For those wanting a longer stay, six grand apartments can be let for deliriously indulgent London digs. Entering *Cheneston's*, The Milestone's superlative restaurant, one is struck by the fine traditional décor, rich mahogany furniture, warm wood paneling and the abundance of natural daylight pouring in from the Victorian leaded windows. It is a room full of character, reflecting the distinctive period architecture of the building. Eating here is a throw back to the regal way things must have been in the late 19th century: fine porcelain and cutlery, silver salvers, silver candlesticks, a roaring fireplace, and unobtrusive but warm service by true professionals. The dishes you find on the menu are influenced by Mrs. Tollman who has a particular passion for food. Chef *Alexandros Diamantis* has a true passion for using locally-sourced seasonal ingredients to produce fine contemporary British food—and, when possible, incorporating some Mediterranean influences. Many of the dishes we tried reflected a keen eye for detail and an ability to perfectly blend flavors and textures. We will not soon forget the Shrimp Stroganoff with Basmati Rice, pan fried wild Sea Trout with braised pear, barley and minted peas, pickled beetroot, spring peas royale and orange segments...or the New Season Lamb, pan-roasted cutlet and rump with rosemary Pomme Anna, butter-glazed carrots, baby onions, and red currant jelly. Cheeses? Yes, they have the best of them all. We can't say enough about the hotel's award-winning Afternoon Tea in the Park Lounge, a ritual fit for royalty. Afternoon Tea is a quintessentially English tradition and is upheld in its finest form here at The Milestone. It is a treat in more ways than one—a delicious array of delicate finger sandwiches is accompanied by warm freshly baked scones served with Devonshire clotted cream and home-made preserves, as well as a selection of pastries including éclairs, tartlets, cupcakes and macarons. To relax after such gustatory adventures, we'd often head for the sauna and heated resistance pool or just nap and then call our butler, who'd bring us very special chicken soup, pan fried Orkney scallops, langoustine tail with crispy chorizo, and Duck breast with croquet of confit leg with fondant potato, steamed greens, braised rhubarb and Port wine jus. And there are 300 wines to choose from, meticulously curated by Sommelier Emmanuel. Who is the genius who gets credit for seeing

all this works as precisely as a Patek Philippe watch? His name is *Andrew Pike*, the soft-spoken, razor-sharp genial general manager, who, like Leonard Bernstein, knows how to orchestrate his staff into performing their best. We could go on and on, telling you about the warm Stables bar, the all-pro concierge team and the housekeeping which would suit the Queen, but just take our word for it— after 35 years of staying at the best: this is one of the best hotels on the planet. Visit [www.milestonehotel.com](http://www.milestonehotel.com).

**L**E BRISTOL IS STILL THE MOST CELEBRATED HOTEL IN PARIS. IT HAS AGE, tradition, modernity, taste and super-efficient service. A landmark for seekers of the highest quality since 1925, many connoisseurs consider it their own Paris townhouse.

But this is no ordinary townhouse—it is beyond genteel, well-bred, breathtakingly beautiful and immaculately kept. *Didier Le Calvez*, one of the great hoteliers in the world, is the virtuoso general manager in charge here with a gentle, knowing hand.



The story of this iconic hotel is a wonderful and lasting one which has been told with passion over nine decades. The Bristol best illustrates the *art de vivre à la française* and gracefully taking hotel keeping to the very height of refinement and quality.

More than a majestic layout of the noblest materials, marbles and precious paneling, original works of art, fabrics from the finest crafts, and the most refined gastronomy under the guidance of the talented three Michelin star Chef *Eric Frechon*, Le Bristol is first and foremost a house where people take precedence. The magnificent building, a masterpiece of the *Oetker Collection*, is rich due to more than 550 devoted and passionate employees: apprentices, chefs, commis, florists, housekeepers all are specialists in their field who put all their all, hearts and souls to continue writing the pages of this wonderful Parisian palace.



So many talented employees have such a strong attachment to the Hotel, which has tled them to work at Le Bristol Paris for over 10 or even 20 years. Those men and women (from over seventy-four different nationalities), perpetuate and enrich a unique

luxury know-how when it comes to service and always perfect the execution of even the simplest of tasks. With devotion, passion and excellence, they contribute with pride to positioning this fabulous hotel into a myth. Le Bristol Paris is located *112 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré*. Created in the grand Parisian style, guests immediately feel at home here. Yet a home unlike any other: Le Bristol was the first hotel in France to receive the title of Palace.



Behind the precious fabrics, works of art and splendid Louis XV and Louis XVI furniture, you will find a harmonious retreat with a decidedly unique atmosphere. Take the magnificent wrought-iron elevator and cross the plush corridors to discover exceptional rooms and suites, whose luxurious size is revealed at first glance. Spacious and chic, rooms display a multitude of refined details. Our heavenly room was filled with masses of fresh flowers and decorated with antique prints, highly polished precious furniture, Canovas fabrics and enjoyed a view of the hotel's stunning French gardens.

Le Bristol is home to four Michelin stars. Triple Michelin-starred Chef Eric Frechon begins every day fired with a passion which he eagerly shares with his kitchen and the loyal clientele of Le Bristol Paris. Le Bristol provides the ultimate creative stage for his supreme talent along with a demanding and



appreciative audience. At *Epicure*, Frechon has created a temple of gastronomy that is absolutely French, his signature style is all about *terroir*, a sense of place, this is after all Paris the gourmet capital of

the world. Frechon also delights in matching unusual ingredients to astounding effect— *vive la difference*. His foie gras, smoked oysters with a duck and green tea bullion is one of those unforgettable dishes people travel to Paris to experience. Beyond the considerable talents of his right hand *Franck Leroy* and Epicure's expert sommelier *Bernard Neveu*, Frechon is also keen to praise restaurant director *Frédéric Kaiser*: "he has rare savoir faire, he knows the produce, has technical ability and loves to host." Guests take a seat in Epicure and relax, while Frechon, Kaiser and the team stage a spectacular show. Epicure can be enjoyed every day of the year, with tables laid formally in an exquisite garden setting throughout the summer.

We rendezvoused with friends at *Le Jardin Francais*, a more relaxed and spontaneous side of Paris life where we enjoyed casual and elegant refreshments day and night. We happily dined by frescoed walls, beneath crystal chandeliers or in the peaceful courtyard garden. The musical atmosphere transforms with the time of day. To get our minds off calories, we headed to *Spa Le Bristol by La Prairie* where experts in beauty, relaxation and well being helped us relinquish all the cares of the world. The hands of highly trained experts in this place of perfect peace where everything is for you had us floating in the clouds. Our treatment began with the eucalyptus steam room, to relax and soothe limbs in preparation for therapy and are concluded with a ginger, lemon and honey infusion for a final boost to the immune system, so we left feeling both serene and revitalized. Then we dove into the pool: it overlooks the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre and le Sacré-Coeur. Surrounded by glass and awash with light this is a pool of elegant



magic. In the evening the sun dips, lights shimmer to life and the swimmer is immersed in the scintillating beauty of the city. In summer months guests can recline on a little balcony fragrant with rosemary, overlooking the majestic Parisian rooftops. The pool evokes the prow of a yacht, with teak decking, and a mural gives a view over blue sea to the pine and olive scattered Côte d'Azur. The fitness centre is located on the first floor. There is a welcoming steam room adjacent to the pool, in the changing area.

In the distance one perceives *Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc*, also owned by the Oetker family. Luxury, charm, style, keen attention to detail—these are all hallmarks of Le Bristol. It is more than a hotel, it is a beautifully balanced home for people who are no longer easily impressed. *Merveilleux*, Le Bristol, the *nec plus ultra* of all Paris hotels. Five stars? It deserves a dozen! Visit [www.lebristolparis.com/eng/home](http://www.lebristolparis.com/eng/home).

**T**HE *PARK HYATT VIENNA* IS A RELATIVELY NEW LUXURY HOTEL IN AN early 20th-century former bank, just a 6-minute walk from Hofburg Imperial Palace and a 7-minute stroll from St. Stephen's Cathedral. If you have a weakness for imperial living and the kind of treatment Franz Josef must have received, this is your kind of place. A discreet entrance leads to soaring public spaces and plush rooms and suites that mix contemporary with traditional Viennese décor. Free Wi-Fi and coffeemakers, along with flat-screen TVs, minibars and designer toiletries are *de rigueur*. Amenities include a ritzy cocktail bar and an elegant, wood-paneled whisky/cigar lounge. The luxe spa has a heated indoor pool and a fitness center, and there's also a



refined tea room and a business center. But what draws us back to the Park Hyatt Vienna is their palatial restaurant, *The Bank*, located in the historic cashier hall. Now

festooned with crystal trees and marble columns, this is a room of poetic beauty only rivaled by the cuisine. Whether you choose breakfast, lunch or dinner here, prepare for innovation and supreme quality. We feasted on goose liver, tender catfish, tangy steak tartare, exotic snail fricassee and smoked eel. On another visit we indulged in classic wiener schnitzel, zander and chocolate cake. The quality of the food at Bank is on the highest level and the service is as friendly as it gets. A large selection of wines complements the scene. The very attractive *Monique Dekker* runs this hotel as if she was conducting a Mozart symphony. Visit [www.vienna.park.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home](http://www.vienna.park.hyatt.com/en/hotel/home).

**R**ETURNING TO THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT BUT YEARNING FOR SOMETHING new, different and away from the madding crowds? Consider *Slovenia*. Craving natural beauty and outdoor adventure, as well as history, culture, castles and baroque architecture? Consider Slovenia. One of Europe's best kept secrets, Slovenia can be characterized as a bit of Bavaria, a sliver of Mediterranean Riviera, a stretch of the Danube, a touch of Venice and a slice of the Balkans. A small, charming country lying at a natural hub of European routes at the eastern tip of the Alps, Slovenia is a destination for those who have already been to Europe once or twice and are ready to get off the beaten track to see a fascinating part of Europe. Once a part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia declared independence in 1991 and walked away relatively unscathed from the turmoil that engulfed the rest of the region, taking with it a bit of everything that travelers most enjoy in this part of the world: mountains and lakes, castles and Alpine forests, vineyards and meadows, beaches and island resorts. While you could easily spend a week here, even with just three to four days at your disposal, it is easy to pack in the major highlights of the country without feeling rushed. Breathe in the beauty of Lake Bled, explore Postonja Cave by underground railway, soak in a coastal sunset in the port town of Piran, and sip on wines from the Vipava Valley. The beautiful baroque capital of *Ljubljana* is just a two-hour drive from Venice or a three-and-a-half hour drive from Vienna—making a perfect extension to a cruise through the Adriatic or along the Danube River. For more



information and a customized trip proposal to this hidden gem of Europe, contact *Robertson International Travel Consultants*, (805) 969-3221 or [info@robertsontravel.com](mailto:info@robertsontravel.com).

**W**e never travel without *Archipelago Botanicals*, the luxurious candle and personal care items that come in a wide variety of collections and fragrances. Our favorite: Archipelago's *Excursion Collection* which features different cities around the world including destinations like Tuscany, Charleston, and Dubai, among many more along with bold colors and fragrances to transport you to your favorite destination in minutes. In addition to the Excursion Collection, Archipelago also offers all of its candles available in travel tin sizes, to bring your special scents with you wherever you go. Our favorites: Cotes Du Rhone Parsons Candle made with mulberry and Vetiver. Another we love is the Black Forest Soy candle consisting of black currant, Douglas fir, and ebony woods. Surround yourself with eucalyptus, bergamot, and lavender among other magical scents by going to [www.shoparchipelago.com](http://www.shoparchipelago.com).

**T**HE *HOTEL SACHER* PATIENTLY SITS regally opposite the Opera House in *Vienna*. Privately owned and operated, this one of the world's great luxury hotels in one of Europe's most culturally significant cities: the birthplace of psychoanalysis and a city of musicians, artists, philosophers and architects. No wonder the guest book lists such names as John F. Kennedy, Indira Gandhi and Queen Elizabeth. The Sachers are proud of their history and their location, and true to their traditions and commitment to provide the highest standards of comfort, superb service and every modern technology and amenity that their discerning guests from all around the world need. The rooms and suites exude timeless style with modern comfort. The elegant *belle époque* influence on the rooms from Vienna's rich cultural past is unmistakable. The hotel celebrates the present too and its 149 rooms and suites feature the most modern amenities, cutting-edge technology and a sense of panache that blends history and modernity, tradition and innovation, in timeless fashion. We enjoyed dinner at the *Restaurant Rote Bar*, traditional classic Viennese specialties in elegant and stylish surroundings where you can either sit in the black and white floor-tiled glass conservatory facing the Opera House or in the grand, dark red damask dining room with large oil paintings and crystal chandeliers. The windows of



the conservatory are folded away in summer to make a large open terrace that is perfect for an al fresco lunch and sitting out on warm evenings. Live piano music in the evenings adds to the ambience. At *Restaurant Anna Sacher*, named after the legendary Grande Dame of the hotel, we dined in a grand room decorated with rich green walls and dark wood paneling with Lobmeyr crystal chandeliers and paintings by Anton Faistauer. The innovative menu showcases traditional local ingredients with chef *Dominik Stolzer's* light, contemporary style. The restaurant also features a superb list of Austrian and international wines. The *Café Sacher Wien* offers the perfect chance to sample a typical Viennese coffee-house atmosphere and—of course—to treat yourself to a slice of the legendary original Sacher torte. The Café Sacher, directly opposite the Opera House, is a popular meeting place in the center of Vienna. The windows of the conservatory fold away in the summer to make an open terrace that is the perfect place to soak up the sights and sounds of the city. And the popular *Blaue Bar* is *the* place to go for an aperitif, to meet friends before the opera, or have a drink after dinner. It is richly decorated with dark blue brocade walls, crystal chandeliers and lushly upholstered couches, creating a snug, cozy atmosphere that brings to mind the bohemian, intellectual Vienna of the early twentieth century. For ultimate relaxation we headed to the exclusive *Sacher Spa* on the 5th floor of the Hotel Sacher where a world of luxury, well being and relaxation awaits. There is an extensive thermal suite and a range of treatments, including the hotel's popular chocolate experiences, which provide a fantastic experience for both body and soul. The Sacher is a quiet, peaceful, well brought up, discreet hotel with a distinguished past looking to a distinguished future. They have the right staff and management to continue their path to great things. Mercifully, dreaded package tourists rarely venture in, assuring you of the cossetting Maria Theresa and the Hapsburgs must have received. If a hotel can be an aphrodisiac, this is definitely the one. Visit [www.sacher.com](http://www.sacher.com).

**W**ITH TRAVELING, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS DO NOT TAKE THEIR medicines correctly. People simply forget to take them or get confused about the proper dosage and timing. Seeing this as a problem, the *MedCenter System* was created. This system emphasizes the "Date" rather than the "Day of the Week." This repetition of the "Date" helps ensure proper medication compliance, even when the user is unsure whether it is Monday or Tuesday. One of the cleverest travel accessories we've seen in a long time is the MedCenter Traveler, a weekly pill organizer and nylon travel pack, a portable way to manage your medications and health while on the road. The Traveler is small enough to fit into a briefcase or carry on. Each pill box is red and green color coded and divided into four cavities marked

with the time of day to show which days are complete, which is very convenient. A Velcro flap allows quick access to pill boxes. It all comes in a ballistic nylon travel pouch. SRP: \$19.95. Check it and other MedCenter products out at [www.medcentersystems.com](http://www.medcentersystems.com).

**W**E HAVE ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED AND ADMIRERD *UNI*WORLD FOR elevating river cruising to the highest levels. Uniworld is known for delivering unrivaled luxury, impeccable attention to detail, unmatched amenities and first-class personalized service aboard their boutique river cruises in Europe. That is why we took a close look recently at *AmaWaterways* to see if their standards, too, are to be lauded. Does a rising tide indeed lift all boats? The short answer is yes.

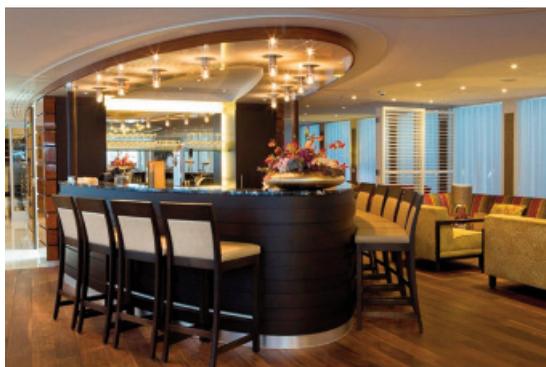
ENTREE has just returned from a spectacular cruise down the enchanting *Rhine* with AmaWaterways, also one of the world's leading river cruise lines, where personal service and luxurious attention to detail are hallmarks. We began our adventure in *Basel* on the beautiful *AmaSerena*, a 164-passenger, sparkling new ship and part of their trend-setting European fleet.



Founded in 2002 by visionary river cruise pioneers *Rudi Schreiner*, *Kristin Karst* and *Jimmy Murphy*, AmaWaterways has earned a reputation for transforming the river cruise industry. New ships are built at a careful pace, incorporating the most innovative features possible for guests, with fresh new designs and unsurpassed quality. Throughout it all, they remain family owned and operated—all guests are greeted “Welcome to the AmaWaterwaysfamily.” Our favorites: sparkling glass elevator and grand staircase, stylish décor inspired by the destination; The Chef’s Table and gourmet cuisine, French balconies, observation lounges and a sun deck for views of passing scenery. What stands out on AmaWaterways is their professionalism and the incredible hospitality of an always-eager-to-please staff. Everyone from distinguished captain, *Jan de Brujin*, and talented cruise director, *Martinez Frederico*, to incredible waiters and housekeepers made this cruise aboard our floating luxury hotel a memorable experience. AmaWaterways’ custom designed ships are setting new standards in European River cruising. The revolutionary “Twin Balcony” combines a French balcony along with an outside balcony in staterooms. Their signature Entertainment on Demand system gives guests Internet access, a music library, the latest movies, Apple TV and more. This is by far the best internet and Wi-

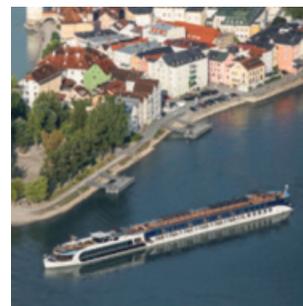
Fi service we have ever experienced on a ship—and there is no charge. Spacious staterooms feature a cozy sitting area perfect for admiring the scenic river views, high quality linens and fluffy duvets, colorful fabrics and ample storage. Marble-appointed bathrooms have Grohe fixtures and multi-jet shower heads, terry robes and generous amenities, plus a glass window that becomes obscure with the flip of a switch! An added bonus was the *In Celebration of Wine* theme. We were joined on board by expert wine host, *Christopher Silva*, President & CEO of *St. Francis Winery & Vineyards* in *Sonoma*. Wine is in the spotlight—with Christopher’s enlightening and entertaining lectures, along with wine tastings of his limited production artisan wines. Our new favorite: his St Francis “Old Vines” Zinfandel 2012. Europe’s rich wine heritage is showcased with exclusive tours to vineyards and historic wine cellars. It’s all about the wine. At *Maison Zimmer Winery*, in the heart of *Riquewibr*, a wine tasting of their Grand Cru Schoenenbourg Riesling in the old cellar dating from 1579 was a memorable highlight.

Renowned for its exceptional cuisine, AmaWaterways is proud to be the only river cruise line ever inducted into *La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs*, the prestigious culinary organization. Executive Chef *Primus Perchtold* oversees all menus on board, featuring exquisite, locally-inspired cuisine and regional wines. Knowing that we would like to recreate his culinary magic at home, one of his recipes was placed in our cabin each night. We feasted on signature dishes at the La Chaîne des Rôtisseurs dinner: foie gras pate with fig chutney, French onion soup, and roasted herb crusted lamb rack were paired with Karl Karle Silvaner and Famille Perrin Ventoux wines. The friendly European-trained staff and our delightful waiter, *Viorel*, remembered our personal preferences and anticipated our desires with remarkable intuition. Some favorites: Healthy Choice options,



our daily fresh fruit smoothie blended with nutrients to start the day, hearty artisan breads, and the Austrian pastry chef’s decadent buffet of tortes, strudels, and chocolate sweets. Dining at The Chef’s Table specialty restaurant is an event to savor. This intimate dining alternative features a view of the chef as he prepares an array of sumptuous courses. Rudi and Kristin’s own wine blend, *Concerto Pinot Noir*, pairs wonderfully with salmon or duck, and their President’s Reserve 2009 is available on the ship. It was a delight to find Kristin Karst, Executive Vice President & Co-Owner, onboard the AmaSerena. Her charm and enthusiasm for creating the best river cruise experiences possible are contagious.

She puts her unique imprint on the design details and the highly personalized service found on this remarkable ship. Prepare to be amazed. All details are well thought out on this gleaming beauty—rich fabrics and contemporary colors, deep sofas and comfy chairs, beautiful art and accents filled the lounge, library and dining room. Captain Jan navigated the AmaSerena through the stunning Rhine River Gorge, past wondrous castles and medieval fortress ruins, terraced vineyards and scenic villages. This is the land of legends and the enticing siren Lorelei.



Our journey continued to Cologne and concluded in Amsterdam with its famous canals and distinctive architecture. A broad menu of complimentary excursions and Limited Edition Tours provided an insightful introduction to each port of call, where expert guides showed us key landmarks as well as hidden gems. We wandered the enchanting Le Petite France district of Strasbourg in Alsace, sampled fine Riesling and Gewurztraminer wines, and were awed by the Astronomical Clock in the imposing Gothic Cathedral. An afternoon in Rudesheim found us strolling picturesque streets with half-timbered houses, and stopping in a café for their coffee specialty: flaming Asbach brandy doused with coffee, then topped with whipped cream and chocolate flakes. Active tour options really got our heart rates going—their “Philosopher’s Way Hike” in the university town of Heidelberg took us off the beaten path, while our guided bicycle tour of Cologne’s Old Town combined fitness with leisure. All European ships carry bicycles for guests to explore on their own. The AmaSerena consistently enjoys the praise of guests. It is no surprise why the company has received numerous honors and accolades: Travel & Leisure’s World’s Best Awards, Cruise Critic’s Editors’ Pick Award, and the highest rated ships in the inaugural Berlitz: River Cruising in Europe travel guide. AmaWaterways will welcome two brand new ships to their European fleet on maiden voyages in 2016. The beautiful AmaViola and the AmaStella will cruise on the Danube, Main and Rhine, as well as the Dutch and Belgian waterways. We are excited to discover more innovations and new destinations. Due to popular demand, more than 40 Wine Cruises voyages are now offered By AmaWaterways on European waterways. Their Taste of Bordeaux itinerary will take travelers on an unforgettable seven-night experience aboard AmaDolce, through France’s renowned Bordeaux region, sailing the Garonne and Dordogne Rivers. For more information, visit [www.AmaWaterways.com](http://www.AmaWaterways.com), call (800) 626-0126, or contact your travel professional. Follow AmaWaterways on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/AmaWaterways](http://www.facebook.com/AmaWaterways).

**W**E CONGRATULATE *SMALL LUXURY HOTELS OF THE WORLD* WHO recently celebrated their 25th anniversary of excellence. We have always admired them. The SHL brand has an unrivaled portfolio of some of the finest, small hotels in the world. Representing some 520 hotels in 80 countries, these properties are independent, often family-owned and run, with a level of warmth, personalized service and individuality that is not often found at larger properties. What further sets SLH apart is the range of memorable experiences available to guests: from thrilling family adventures to spa sanctuaries to UNESCO cultural site visits. Even pet pampering stays are available. *The Club at SLH* members receive exclusive benefits from day one. The more you stay, the more they will spoil you. Loved members receive room upgrades on every stay, complimentary breakfast for two, and late check-out. We always look forward to their biannual magazine BE INSPIRED for their carefully-selected list of special places and extraordinary delicacies. Booking is easy, whether through [www.slh.com](http://www.slh.com), your favorite travel agent, or on your mobile device. They are always delighted to put together a personalized itinerary for you. Find a room, check availability, and join The Club, all at [slh.com](http://slh.com). Browse hotels on the SLH iPhone app. Follow them on Twitter, Instagram, or on Pinterest.



ENTREE recently explored Small Luxury Hotels of the World properties in *Portugal* and found some true gems. We were drawn to Portugal as we are all enthusiasts and lovers of fine cuisine, historic cities, UNESCO World Heritage sites and centuries-old legends and stories. SLH did not disappoint as we enjoyed stratospheric levels of service and unique experiences. Portugal's treasures are open for guests to take advantage of as never before. Here are some we were fortunate to have:

We started at the *Pousada de Lisboa* in *Lisbon*. Set in a magnificent, stately building in the heart of Lisbon, the Pousada de Lisboa was just inaugurated in June 2015. The property is the newest member also of Pestana Pousadas de Portugal. Formerly the home of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the property's desirable location, impeccable service, and luxurious accommodations place the Pousada among Lisbon's leading hotels. Beautifully restored, the Pousada de Lisboa is appointed with fine museum-quality paintings and antiques. Crowning features: an inner courtyard, vaulted ceilings, and the historic grand ballroom. All 90 rooms boast city views mixing contemporary style with period charm. We found the ornately detailed headboards, marble bathrooms and neutral tones very pleasing. For the seriously indulgent, the Dom Perignon suite takes luxury

to the extreme. You could not want for anything. Sophisticated and glamorous, this elegant suite has magnificent balconies and panoramic views of the *Praça do Comércio*. Of course, Dom Perignon champagne is included. Robes and linens are also designed by Dom



Perignon. The restaurant *Lisboeta* invites guests to enjoy the best of traditional Portuguese cuisine with a modern twist. The Pousada de Lisboa has just been distinguished as the “Best Newcomer” in the prestigious Excellence Awards of Conde Nast Johansens 2016. It is easy to see why. And this was only five months after opening. From the hotel, a short stroll leads to a wealth of shopping, museums and famous sites. In the midst of it all, the Pousada of Lisbon provides a bastion of quiet elegance and grace in this magical city. For more information visit [www.sbl.com](http://www.sbl.com) or [www.pousadas.pt](http://www.pousadas.pt).

Arriving in Lisbon, we had an eagerly anticipated dinner at *Restaurant Eleven*. Set high on a hill in Parque Eduardo VII, this contemporary restaurant features sweeping views of Lisbon and the river Tagus. The architecture is modern, with natural materials of wood and decorative stone, and enormous glass windows. Of course we expected a lot from Chef *Joachim Koerper* at this well-established Michelin star gourmet hot spot and he did not disappoint as one of the masters of Mediterranean cuisine. Throughout his career Joachim has worked in such renowned restaurants as L’Ambroisie in Paris and Girasol in Moraira, Alicante. His confit suckling pig with tomato chutney, scallops with dashes of oysters, and the tangerine crème brulee with carrot ice-cream were to die for. The wine list is impressive, with some of Portugal's finest labels sharing the cellar with a noted international selection. [www.restauranteleven.com](http://www.restauranteleven.com).

*Antiga Casa dos Pastéis de Belém* is the home of the world-famous *pasteis de nata*, Portugal's very own version of the custard tart. Their recipe is a well-guarded secret, and only at this venerated bakery do you find the original. Layers of oven-fired pastry are filled with a light, creamy custard. Plan to arrive shortly after the doors open to beat the crowds and indulge in the best custard tarts in the city of Lisbon. Or choose from a wonderfully tempting selection of cakes, pastries and savory snacks.



*Internacional Design Hotel* leads the way in imaginative and creative interior design. Located on Rossio Square in the heart of historic *Lisbon*, all 55 rooms have one of four themes: Zen, Tribal, Urban and Pop. Artwork ranges from Andy Warhol prints with geometric shapes to zebra murals. Each floor even has its own fragrance. The hotel has a fun and funky

atmosphere, and we look forward to returning for an extended stay. The hotel's *Bastardo* bistro stands out by serving authentic Portuguese cuisine, influenced by centuries of discovery. Décor is a diverse mix of playful colors, contemporary furniture, and Pop Art details. The menu is also playful, with creative flavor combinations. We enjoyed excellent ceviche with cod and seaweed salad, and a satisfying *bacalao* entrée. Save room for dessert—rice pudding was our pick. [www.idesignhotel.com](http://www.idesignhotel.com).



*L'AND Vineyards Resort*, located in the heart of the *Alentejo*, is another proud member of Small Luxury Hotels. This exclusive property with only 22 suites, integrates modern architecture with nature. The resort is situated around a formal vineyard garden and a swimming pool with commanding views of the lake and the medieval hilltop castle of Montemor. The interiors were designed by groundbreaking Brazilian architect, *Marcio Kogan*, who created the space using natural stone, slate and wood along with unusual art pieces and furniture.

We were greeted by charming general manager, *Hugo Valadas*, and his superbly trained staff. Spacious outdoor terraces provide the perfect spot for taking in sweeping views or enjoying the warmth of an outdoor fireplace at night. We loved our private interior garden complete with plunge pool. At L'AND Vineyards, guests can literally sleep under the stars and the Alentejo night sky, with retractable ceilings in private suites. In addition to its gastronomic and vinous attractions, the stunning property is an oasis of calm and natural beauty. An early morning hot-air balloon trip is the most exhilarating way to start the day. Guests leave at sunrise for an unforgettable flight soaring over the vineyards and rolling plains of Alentejo. After a day of exploring, head to the *Vinothérapie Spa by Caudalie*, renowned for treatments and products derived from the natural benefits of grapes. Some Vinotherapist specialties: the Crushed Cabernet Scrub, the Merlot Wrap, or the Pulp Friction Massage with fresh grapes. Caudalie's signature is the Wine Maker's Massage, which recreates the ritualistic steps of the wine-making process on the body. Add the finishing touch to your stay by enjoying refined, creative cuisine at their Michelin-starred restaurant. *Chef Miguel Laffan* transports visitors on a culinary journey, combining Mediterranean cuisine with contemporary influences. Local products are paired with wines from the hotel's own renowned vineyard where Reserve wines are produced in very small quantities, using an artisanal winemaking process. [www.l-andvineyards.com](http://www.l-andvineyards.com) or [www.slb.com/hotels/l-and-vineyards-resort](http://www.slb.com/hotels/l-and-vineyards-resort).

*Alentejo Marmoris Hotel & Spa* is set in the historic village of *Vila Vicosa*. We are delighted to share this gem with you. Five years ago the *Alves* family began a meticulous renovation, transforming an olive oil factory into a luxury retreat. The family who owns the Alentejo Marmoris Hotel are also in the marble business, and they decided to showcase marble in their 44 room boutique hotel. Marble features throughout the property; from intricately decorated floors to the walls. General Manager *Susete Alves* and her capable staff have been impressing guests and generating praise since opening in 2013. Comfortable rooms and suites are filled with contemporary furniture and modern fabrics. The beds will whisk you into blissful sleep. Each stunning marble bathroom is individually designed, with marble covering all the walls and floors. Most rooms have an outdoor terrace. One can't help but relax here; taking a refreshing dip in the sparkling pools, biking along country roads, or sampling the best regional wines. The *Stone Spabas* a serene setting in an old marble quarry, with impressive walls of stone. Indulgent treatments use products by *Karin Herzog*, and the spa features a heated swimming pool with hydrotherapy circuit, along with a hammam. At the hotel's *Narcissus Fernandesii* restaurant, *Chef Carlos Galhardas* prepares fish, game and meats with outstanding expertise, using fresh products that come from the surrounding fields of Vila Vicosa. We had a memorable culinary experience sampling classic dishes: Seared goat cheese and crispy acorn, with goat cheese ice cream: pumpkin risotto: and Alentejo pork plumes with smoked meats. An extensive wine cellar is filled with Alentejo wines along with wines from all over the world. On our wish list: a cooking workshop at Alentejo Marmoris Hotel. Start by visiting Vila Vicosa market with the chef, and then learn to prepare four regional dishes. Lunch follows with wines selected to accompany your creations, and recipes are sent home with you. Their knowledgeable guide, *Norberto*, is brilliant at suggesting the best way to experience this picturesque region. Our custom tour included the grandeur of the Ducal Palace, the heritage of Estremoz, and a stop at the hotel owners' marble quarry. Arrangements can also be made for an impressive private dinner at Dona Maria, a mid-18th century palace in Estremoz. About the Wine tour focuses on Alentejo wine heritage, with visits to wine cellars for guided tours with their owners. Nearby is the city of Evora, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. [www.alentejomarmoris.com](http://www.alentejomarmoris.com) or [www.slh.com/hotels/alentejo-marmoris-hotel-and-spa](http://www.slh.com/hotels/alentejo-marmoris-hotel-and-spa).

Once a favorite haunt of European royalty and aristocracy, the *Palacio Estoril Hotel, Golf & Spa* retains its title of *the* place to stay in *Estoril*. Since 1930, the hotel has told a story of glorious life and timeless history. The sophisticated ambience and elegant style of the Palacio upholds the hotel's motto of "Grand and Cozy." Ian Fleming spent a season at the Hotel



Palacio in 1941, where the environment of espionage there at the height of the Second World War became the inspiration for his spy in the service of the British crown. Russian, German, and English spies from both sides of the conflict were here, along with movie stars, millionaires, and Heads of State. This was also the movie location of “James Bond—007 On Her Majesty’s Secret Service.” The classic décor in rooms is pleasant and inviting, with flowered fabrics, fine furniture, and marble bathrooms. Balconies overlook manicured gardens and a sparkling pool. A bottle of vintage port and delicious custard tarts were a welcome surprise in our room. It was the energetic staff that made our experience first class. At age 81, the distinguished doorman has been on staff for 64 years. At dinner, we ate extremely well at the *Grill Room* restaurant, which is packed with locals and hotel guests every evening. Dinner here is an event to savor. Their top notch kitchen combines legendary traditions with today’s techniques. A sumptuous breakfast buffet provided the perfect start to the morning. We recommend a dip in the *The Dynamic Pool* at *Banyan Tree Spa* designed to revitalize the mind, body and soul. A menu of celebrated treatments is available. The ocean front promenade is just a five minute stroll away. By night, the nearby casino provides the opportunity to challenge Lady Luck at the tables. The Estoril Golf Course offers guests special rates to play on the green fairways of the *Mackenzie Ross* designed course. We would also suggest a trip to the parks and palaces of nearby Sintra, which is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. [www.slb.com/hotels/palacio-estoril](http://www.slb.com/hotels/palacio-estoril).

Time for a drink. *Quinta do Carmo*, also know as *Quinta de Dona Maria* is located in *Estremoz* in the Alentejo region of Portugal. In the 18th century, King Joao V gave this Quinta to a courtesan with whom he fell madly in love—her name now graces the labels of the wine. Wine has been produced in this



Quinta for over 130 years. The current owner, *Julio Tassara de Bastos*, has restored and enlarged the old winery, keeping the famous marble wine tanks or *lagares* for foot treading the best grapes by this traditional method.

Notable varieties from Dona Maria Winery are: Aragonez, Touriga Nacional, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Viognier. We wish we had brought home more of their Amantis Reserve 2013 wine. The grapes, coming from new and old vines, maintain the personality and quality of the wines produced before. Lunch at the historic palace with gracious *Isabel Bastos* is a very special experience. Wonderful cuisine paired with Dona Maria wines, served in a stunning dining room full of antiques and family treasures was a highlight of our day. Dona Maria Winery at [www.donamaria.pt](http://www.donamaria.pt).

*TAP PORTUGAL Airlines* took us to the fun and enchantment of Portugal with their special brand of hospitality and Business Class comfort. Senior supervisor, *Cesar Cruz Lopes*, made our check-in a breeze. A taste of Portuguese gourmet food and wine is found on board. Meals served result from the inspired choices of renowned chefs and the healthiest, most natural ingredients. The chefs' panel includes such luminaries as *Vitor Sobral* and *Danio Braga*. Marinated shrimp with lemon cilantro and garlic served on tomato rice was a highlight for us. TAP endeavors to pair just the right wines with the menus. Dona Maria Red Wine 2012 from Alentejo is a customer favorite. The wine list is selected by a panel of experts and wine lovers from Brazil and Portugal, led by *Joao Paulo Martins*. We arrived refreshed and ready to explore after an easy 5-½ hour flight from Newark Liberty International airport to Lisbon, where plenty of connections are available to rest of Europe on this Star Alliance Member. [www.flytap.com](http://www.flytap.com).

**L**AKE COMO IS OUR ULTIMATE DESTINATION. Why are we drawn back year after year? Of course we like the neo-classical villas of celebrities that are framed by spectacular mountains that turn a passionate pink at sunset. But there is another draw, the *Grand Hotel Tremezzo*, that lures guests back year after year. Built in the early 1900's, the time of romantic grand tours, long voyages, and illustrious travelers, Lake Como was already an obligatory stop over for the cultured travelers from the world over. Now, after a three-year, multi-million dollar makeover, it is even better than ever. It is chic and classy; with splashes of color everywhere from the vases of roses to the button-backed sofas, not to mention the genuinely charming staff of the sort you find mainly in a family-run hotel. Book one of the rooftop suites, which have: Jacuzzi-tubs on the terrace, a wall-to-wall marble bathroom, silky sheets and a view that will leave you speechless. One of the hotel's four historic suites, *The Aurelia Suite* (from \$1,150) was completely redone with wood paneled foyer, custom furnishings inspired by heirlooms of the family that owns the hotel. Aurelia herself, a 90 year-old dowager of the family donated a few of the antiques in the suite. If you can tear yourself away put on your topsiders and take to the water in the hotel's 1961 Venetian motor launch. Captain *Diego* will tell you who lives where and also who could be misbehaving. On the way back, stop by the hotel's floating swimming pool on the lake...or more precisely, in the lake. Before dinner at *La Terrazza* restaurant, perhaps a visit to the newly remodeled *T Spa* might be in order. Part of the re-birth of the Grand Hotel Tremezzo is its signature spa, the T Spa. The partnership with *ESPA* is housed in the 18th-century Villa Emilia to produce a lavish facility comprised of five treatment rooms, luxurious hammam, nail bar,



sauna & steam baths, pools, gym and much more. It's hard to understand being stressed in a place like Tremezzo, but if you are, this is the place to loose it. Of course, dining here is very special: the hotel carries on its tradition in true gourmet style, by collaborating with the biggest name in modern Italian cuisine: *Gualtiero Marchesi*, whose task it is, together with the hotel's own expert chef, *Oswaldo Presazzi*, to seduce you every day with virtuoso menus that are light and full of character—a tribute to the flavors of the local area. You'll be inspired every day by this artist's creativity. And you'll be even more inspired by the romantic setting of *La Terrazza* restaurant, without a shadow of a doubt the most beautiful on Lake Como. Greta Garbo used to come here to dine in consummate elegance. Our favorite dish: a saffron risotto embedded with a square of 24 carat gold foil....seriously. Make your reservations before November, when the hotel closes for the winter. Tel: +39.0344.42491, [www.grandhoteltremezzo.com](http://www.grandhoteltremezzo.com).

WHEN VISITING THE GLORIOUS  
WILLAMETTE Valley in Oregon's  
acclaimed Pinot Noir producing region  
we can recommend *The Allison Inn &*



*Spa* right in the heart of it all. This area makes some of the very best of the best Pinot wines in the country. The Allison Inn fits nicely on about 35 lush acres. It is the brainchild and legacy property of co-founders *Ken* and *Joan Austin* of A-Dec, one of the largest dental equipment manufacturers in the world and based in Newberg. The Allison Inn & Spa is not affiliated with any hotel group. The rooms are very comfortable and spacious, with gas fire places. There is a beautiful indoor pool and a large spa and fitness center. *Restaurant JORY*, named after one of the soil types where the pinot grapes are grown, is excellent. There is bar seating that's fun to watch and chat with the talented kitchen team and a chef's table that accommodates up to ten people. There is also a private dining room and ballrooms. There are walking and running trails all around the well-cared-for property with many sitting areas with sculptures in metal, stone and wood. Indeed, the art throughout the property is from local Oregon artists. This is our highly recommended home base while visiting the great wine region of Willamette Valley and is skillfully managed by Managing Director *Pierre Zreik*. *The Allison Inn & Spa 2525 Allison Lane, Newberg, Oregon 97132, (503) 554-2525.*

THERE ARE GREAT RESTAURANTS IN THIS WORLD...AND THERE ARE THE greatest restaurants. *Nobu Las Vegas* is one of the greatest. Sexy and serene with flattering delicate lighting, the setting is sleek and calm. Our recent dinner at there was like a great symphony, starting softly

with subtle taste teasers, building with bold flavors and creativity, and closing with a crescendo, a true masterpiece with inspired staff teamwork and deep talent in the kitchen. We all have heard about Nobu. He is a masterful chef and terrific charming dedicated host. He has carefully brought his highly acclaimed Nobu brand to Las Vegas with the world's largest Nobu Restaurant space and *Caesars Palace Las Vegas* in the heart of the glam *Nobu Hotel* is where the action takes place. The 11,200-square-foot dining area and adjacent lounge feature a sushi bar, private dining area and circular central bar. The décor is understated yet very sophisticated. It's also the only U.S. Nobu offering teppan tables. With a menu that pleases the most elevated of palates, feast on imported Asian and Japanese fish, imported seafood, sushi rolls and exotic delicacies. We indulged in a dizzying seven courses including Yellowtail with Jalapeño, Artichoke salad, Japanese snapper with dry miso, black cod with sweet miso in a bite size piece over garlic chips and ginger in a butter lettuce cup, Rock shrimp tempura with creamy spicy sauce and the highest quality A5 Japanese Wagyu beef flamed at our table. We took an breath and finished with the finest sushi that one can imagine. Nobu has the best sushi chefs in the business and at Nobu Las Vegas they are a theatrical event in themselves, a line of true pros in white working magically to create sushi and sashimi of the rarest quality. Don't miss the shaved ice dessert and be sure and ask your server about vegetarian, vegan and gluten free menu items. Nobu stocks three rare sakes from Japan's Hokusetsu brewery on Sado Island, one of which is made by hand and goes through a slow drip process. And the wine list soars with creativity. Best of all, the service at Nobu is fit for an Emperor, diligent yet friendly, precise yet casual, always polite and always professional and well-informed. We cannot think of a restaurant that can rival Nobu in Las Vegas or in the world. *Nobu, Las Vegas, 3570 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Las Vegas, NV 89109, Tel: (702) 785-6677. [www.caesars.com/nobu-caesars-palace/restaurants/nobu](http://www.caesars.com/nobu-caesars-palace/restaurants/nobu)*. Not headed to Las Vegas? Never fear, there are 32 Nobu restaurants around the world in such places as Hong Kong, Mexico City, Cape Town, Budapest, Tokyo, as well as Miami, L.A., New York, Dallas, Aspen and Hawaii, every one a gem.



**H**OT TYPE: KEISUKE FUJIWARA, INTERIOR ELEMENTS FOR SPACE AND Product Design, Frame Books, the international designer's first portfolio book covers 15 years of his work from his Japanese studio. An in-depth look at his innovative retail interiors, offices, exhibition and product design, chair design and lighting. WILLIAM KRISSEL'S PALM SPRINGS, The Language of Modernism, Gibbs Smith publishers, the first

modern monograph chronicling the work and architectural philosophy of this pioneer of Midcentury Modernism. **UNSEEN MIDCENTURY DESERT MODERN** by photographer Dan Chavkin, Gibbs Smith, a showcase of dozens of gems of modernist design hidden away in Palm Springs and the surrounding area. A once-in-a-lifetime peek at these rare modern masterpieces. Since 2002, DK has shown travelers to the best of everything in more than 80 global destinations with the bestselling DK Eyewitness Travel Top 10 Guides. Cutting down hours of trip planning, these award-winning pocket guides take the guesswork out of travel with top 10 lists that point you straight to the best sleeping, eating, sightseeing and entertainment. Fans will be happy to hear a series-wide relaunch and huge upgrade of DK Eyewitness Travel Top 10 Guides is hot off the press. The first set of revamped guides includes these vacation spots: London, Barcelona, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, Washington, D.C., New York City, Iceland, San Francisco, Rome and Berlin. The rest of the new books, covering all of the existing destinations, will continue to release through 2018. DK's authors and editors pour years of travel expertise into the Top 10 recommendations. There's a reason that many devoted Top 10 travelers won't leave home with any other guidebook," says DK Publishing Director Georgina Dee. "Now, with a new look and new features, that's set to be truer than ever." **THE ROYAL TOUCH, Simply Stunning Home Cooking from a Former Royal Chef**, ACC Editions, by Carolyn Robb who was former personal chef to TRH The Prince and Princess of Wales and TRH Prince William and Prince Harry, a beautiful compilation of stunning recipes gathered over decades and in many a royal palace. This is food not only fit for royals, but food that Robb loves to serve to her family, everything from her Mother's inspiration and her childhood in South Africa to her 13 years as a royal household chef. Whether special entertaining, cozy dinners for two, or cooking for the children, this book has simple recipes that are easy to prepare and won't break the bank. **MOTHER EARTH NEWS ALMANAC: A Guide for All Seasons**, Quarto Publishing Group, the long-out-of-print, best-selling classic returns, newly updated—a lively resource about the satisfying, self-sufficient lifestyles of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

**W**INES THAT MADE A LASTING IMPRESSION ON US: *STARFIELD Vineyards 2011 The Starbeam Cabernet Sauvignon*, their flagship wine from Napa, a virtuoso balance of aroma, flavor and texture. *Rosenthal The Malibu Estate, 2009 Single Vineyard Cabernet Estate Block M*, their marquee block, an exceptional limited edition wine of great character. *The Debate 2012 Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper Cabernet*

*Sauvignon*, the epitome of Napa Valley excellence. *DeLille Cellars 2012 D2*, a *Columbia Valley Washington* Bordeaux-style blend of distinction retailing at about \$48 and worth every penny. *MONTES ALPHA Cabernet Sauvignon*: a leader among Chilean Cabernets, aged for 12 months in French fine grain Allier oak barrels. Intense ruby color, with blackcurrant, chocolate and cigar box aromas; balanced with well-integrated oak. Great complexity of flavors in the mouth; mid-palate is full-bodied and balanced, with remarkably long finish. A superb wine ready to drink now, it can also be chosen for cellaring for future enjoyment. SRP: \$19.99. *MONTES ALPHA Syrah* is from their La Finca estate in the Apalta Valley. This Syrah is the scarcest of the Alpha wines. Yields are very low at only 6 tonnes per hectare. The wine is aged in French oak barrels for one year and has only one soft filtering. In the manner of Rhone producers, the winemaker adds a small percentage of Cabernet Sauvignon, also originating from Apalta, and some Viognier, to the final mixture. Of intense ruby red color, it has a great aroma with floral, tobacco and leather notes. Strong and full-bodied on the palate, with soft and mature tannins. A very long, elegant and satisfying aftertaste. A superb Syrah. SRP: \$14.99-\$17.99. *Stone Edge Farm Cabernet Sauvignon 2011* from *Sonoma*, a wine of elegance and finesse with a smooth, silky structure and superb balance, elegance and full expression of fruit, only 650 cases produced. Their *Sauvignon Blanc 2014* with only 390 cases made is a bright wine celebrating the sustainable relationship between nature and humanity. *Masut Pinot Noir 2014 Eagle Peak* from Mendocino County, aged 15 months in French oak yielding an intense high-toned wine with red fruits combined with hints of liquorice and spice on the nose. *2013 Folie a Deux Dry Creek Valley Sonoma*, sustainably grown with concentrated flavors of blackberry jam, black cherry, boysenberry and warm mocha notes. *Barden 2014 Chardonnay, Sta. Rita Hills*, from *Margerum Wine Company*, extraordinary quality, a subtle, nuanced, polished Chardonnay with complex aromas and earthy balance between fruit and acidity.

Try any of these with a selection of *Castello* cheeses, some of the tastiest and creatively crafted cheeses in the world. We'd choose Castello Danish Blue, Castello Aged Havarti, or Castello Double Crème for starters. [www.castellocheese.com](http://www.castellocheese.com).

Scotch drinkers rejoice: *Johnnie Walker Blended Scotch* has rung in the new lunar year with a limited edition Year of the Monkey bottle inspired by the rich culture of the Chinese Zodiac. Tailor-made for whisky lovers, this is a perfect fusion of the classic elements of traditional Scotch distilling with classic

Oriental art. White glaze with blue ink recalls the elegance of prized Chinese blue and white porcelain. This is a true celebration of the joy, bravery and pioneering sprit of Johnnie Walker Blended Scotch. SRP: \$258.

*Johnnie Walker Select Casks—Rye Cask Finish* is a Scotch Whisky blend that showcases the best of Scottish blending and maturation expertise. With Cardhu single malt at the heart of the blend, Johnnie Walker's Master Blender *Jim Beveridge* used whiskies matured for at least ten years in first-fill American Oak casks to create this blend. He finished the Scotch in ex-rye whiskey casks, creating a complex new whisky with rich layers of flavor starting with creamy vanilla notes and transitioning to a spicier finish.

While we're on the subject of drinking, *Margerum's Amaro* comes to mind. You must try it. A house recipe fortified wine (grape neutral spirits) mixed with herbs (sage, thyme, marjoram, parsley, lemon verbena, rosemary and mint), barks, roots, dried orange peels and caramelized simple syrup. It is lovingly aged in casks outdoors. Drink it neat or use in a cocktail. Only 100 cases produced and well worth it at \$50 a bottle. [www.margerumwinecompany.com](http://www.margerumwinecompany.com).

**W**E CAME ACROSS A SUPERIOR OLIVE OIL WHILE ON A RECENT JAUNT to *Sonoma. Stone Edge Farm's Estate Grown Sonoma Valley Organic Olive Oil 2014 Harvest* comes from Manzanillo trees and bottled unfiltered. Like their grapevines, their olive oil trees are farmed organically and it shows in the taste—delicate, buttery and earthy with a mellow, floral scent. [www.stoneedgefarm.com](http://www.stoneedgefarm.com).

**T**HERE HAS TO BE A SPECIAL PLACE IN HELL FOR HOTELIERS WHO instruct their housekeeping staff to tie bathroom robes so tightly with the belts that it takes the strength and guile of Houdini to open them. And the same place is reserved for those who stock their bathrooms with shampoos and conditioners that not only have such small print on them that guests cannot discern which is which but that are too difficult to open (especially in the shower). We often wonder: do these hoteliers ever spend the night in their own rooms? We guess not, judging by the missteps we find so often like square soaps, soaps that are wrapped too tightly with plastic or paper, chatty bellmen who want to explain every detail in the room when all you just want to do is throw yourself on the bed and decompress after a long tedious flight, and front desk personnel who never look you in the eye so intent are they to bang away on their computer. While we are on this rant, we hate soap dispensers in the bath, phones we cannot figure out, lighting that takes a visit

from the engineer to decipher and any hotel that puts so much reading crap in the room that you can't find a space for your own crap. And stop turning the radio on when we are not there, please. And never coming back for your room service table.

And here are some hotels that are doing things right:

*Malin +Goetz* Vitamin b5 Body Moisturizer, Peppermint Shampoo, Cilantro Hair Conditioner, Rum Bar Soap, Bergamot Body Wash at *Casa del Mar, Santa Monica*, very hip and effective, refreshing, sensitive natural products.

*The Lowell Hotel* in *New York* has real wood burning fireplaces in many of their rooms and suites which a fireplace butler hand lights with slow-burning, aromatic applewood from Pennsylvania.

The genial General Manager of *The Montague on the Gardens* in *London* welcomes all guests with a box of homemade biscuits and a hand written note

*Hotel 41* in *London* invites guests to "Plunder the Pantry" and offers complimentary food offerings around the clock

*The Rubens at the Palace* in *London* pours Pink Cristal Champagne by the glass in their sexy Leopard Bar

*Belmond El Encanto* in *Santa Barbara* has their own Holstein cow, Ellie, who helps produce El Encanto's award-winning Aged White Cheddar Cheese Blocks made from her organic and farm fresh milk. The cow happily resides on a family-owned farm in the Central Valley.

*Fairmont's Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa* makes sure a bottle of fine red wine is waiting as a gift in each room. Ours was 2014 Trinity Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon...they also have a complimentary wine tasting for guests each afternoon

*Big Sur's Post Ranch Inn's* well-stocked mini bar is free and when you depart they give you a packet of wildflower seeds. Their terrific buffet breakfast is also on the house.

Besides serving extraordinary cuisine, the restaurant at *Taj San Francisco* pours Dom Perignon by the glass

Some of the villas at *West Hollywood's* sexy *Sunset Marquis Hotel* have baby grand pianos

*The Milestone* in *London* delivers each guest a big basket of extra large soaps full of delightful fragrances and gives them their choice of selecting one or more.

**D**ON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUR BLOG, [WWW.TRAVELBYENTREE.COM](http://WWW.TRAVELBYENTREE.COM), FOR regular updates, new discoveries, ingenious travel products, saucy opinions, and dreadful encounters as we roam the planet. We update this blog frequently.

#### ENTREE RECOMMENDS

There are good travel agencies. And there are great travel agencies. ENTREE keeps getting requests for the very best travel agency. Well, we've found the one. Robertson International Travel is headquartered in Santa Barbara and has 54 years under their belt catering to the discerning and discriminating. They do more than just book tickets, as you might expect, they create memorable life experiences around the world. Small by design, Robertson is a team of three very smart and wonderful people—founder Brian Robertson, his Managing Partner Heather Schuyler, and Travel Consultant Jessica Fisher. With Robertson you deal with the principals only. They are available to craft your itinerary, get you the best value, and ignite your travel adventure with the finest ideas. These are very clever people with a special touch. ENTREE only deals with Robertson Travel and we are proud to endorse them as our exclusive and official travel agency. They know the world, and through their association with Virtuoso, have insider contacts in every corner of the globe to customize your trip with special flourishes and details. Call them at (805) 969-3221 and check out their website at [www.robertsontravel.com](http://www.robertsontravel.com). E-mail contact: [info@robertsontravel.com](mailto:info@robertsontravel.com).



Heather Schuyler



Brian Robertson



Jessica Fisher

ENTREE is published monthly by ENTREE Travel, 695 Olive Road, Santa Barbara, California 93108, (805) 969-5848, Fax (805) 969-5849, William Tomicki, Editor and Publisher, [wtomicki@aol.com](mailto:wtomicki@aol.com). Managing Editor: Hadley Tomicki. Associate Publisher: Edward L. Stephenson. Senior Executive Editor: Syd Summerhill. Executive Editors: Barbara Daugherty, Kameron Seagren. Senior Editors: Tom Buhl, Ron Green, Randall Shulman. Contributing Editors: Alan Porter, Theron Tomicki, Karen Robertson. In Memoriam: Senior Contributing Editor Mark Birley, 1998-2007; Special Senior Executive Editor Elizabeth F. Kagan, Executive Editor Tom Landau. Subscriptions are \$75 per year, satisfaction guaranteed. Back issues are available at \$10 per copy. See ENTREE online at [www.entreenews.com](http://www.entreenews.com). ENTREE endorses the services of Luggage Concierge, [www.luggageconcierge.com](http://www.luggageconcierge.com), when you want to meet your luggage there and avoid all stress and hassles by shipping your bags ahead of time. We also exclusively use DMC Limousines in New York, (212) 481-6365, for the best chauffeured limousines and service possible. In Los Angeles, we highly recommend Crown Limo LA, [www.crownlimola.com](http://www.crownlimola.com), (310) 737-0888. You deserve more than than cheap airport parking. When flying out of Los Angeles and many other major airports, ENTREE always entrusts their car to The Parking Spot. As the leading near-airport parking company in the nation, The Parking Spot provides full service parking to 21 major airports in the U.S., with a total of 34 parking lots. When you reserve a space with The Parking Spot, you can expect more than ordinary airport parking. You're getting a superior airport parking experience. Their lots are spacious, fully-fenced, well lit, and open 24 hours a day 7 days a week. They offer: friendly shuttles every 5-7 minutes, earn free parking with The Spot Club, luggage assistance, complimentary newspaper & chilled bottled water. They'll even detail your car while you're away. Know what airport you're departing from? Go to [www.theparkingspot.com](http://www.theparkingspot.com) for a list of all their parking locations.