

September-October 2012

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Founded 1981...our 31st year

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L E MANOIR AUX QUAT'SAISONS, A TRANSFORMED 15TH CENTURY MANOR house with its reputation of nothing less than absolute perfection, more than fulfilled its promise to us. On arrival, we found sunny pathways lined with a profusion of lavender that perfumed the air. With high expectations we entered our suite. Ours was the *Jade Suite*, and we had planned on a brief afternoon nap. Well, brief it was not. We left the following morning and only because we had places to go and people to see. The kind of people and places that could not be changed or change we would have made just to linger and languish longer. We had succumbed. This was a suite that enveloped and did not easily let go. Hmmm? Like De Quincy's opium dreams, our suite, with its Asian influence, seduced. We were on our way to Oxford and college again, with memories of our past studies there fresh in our minds. Our room, while studying DeQuincy years ago, in Oxford was actually the room directly below DeQuincy's and we mention this as it was definitely NOT a Manoir suite and with this memory we were purring on entering our special world for the night. Our school days at Oxford were one thing



but now this is the way to do Oxford, Le Manoir way. Our suite was done up in warm tones and burnt colors heavy with sumptuous silks, velvets and a draped boudoir. A television dropped from the ceiling directly above our bed and the garden views from our bedroom window were storybook. We made a note to explore them the following day as we couldn't resist the lure of our suite. Our bathroom had a huge tub, walk-in shower and steam room complete with stone bench upon which to recline. We had finished our unforgettable lunch (more on the restaurant next month) and it was all we could do to slip into bed and luxuriate. Ah, yes, we were able to find room for the chocolates, fruit and port we found waiting for us on our dining table and we then tucked into a book about Le Manoir and read about their hopes to exceed expectations. Exceed they do and their expectations are high, pole vaulting high. Their hope is that a guest's stay be a refuge from everyday life where perfection is found. Their hopes exceeded again. The gardens must be enjoyed. The kitchen garden is an incredible two acres of vegetables and herbs that sustains the two Michelin-starred restaurant eight months of the year. The Japanese tea garden offers calm, ponds and quiet. There is more: a wild flower meadow, a croquet lawn, a walled garden, all to be savored. If leave you must, Oxford and all that it offers, is at your doorstep. If a palace is more to your liking, you will find *Blenheim Palace* only 12 miles away. But we cannot imagine that Blenheim would treat you any better than the adroit General Manager *Philip Newman-Hall* and his very attentive, very polite polished team. Each room and suite has a story of its own and so time must be spent in the choosing. Many have their own terrace gardens and views of the grounds. The Dovecote, L'Orangerie, Lace, Blanc De Blanc are an exceptional few. Choose to your liking but choose you must. Do not miss the absolute heavenly experience of Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, a member of *Relais & Chateaux* and a jewel in the crown of *Orient-Express*. Visit www.manoir.com.

WE BUMPED INTO ELEGANT *SIR EVELYN DE ROTHSCHILD* AT THE upper crust restaurant *Bellamy's* while in *London*. Evelyn was lunching with Sotheby's dashing *Peter Blond* and enthusiastic to tell us about *William Curley*, a patisserie and chocolatier he has a proud investment in. We couldn't resist paying a visit to see the shop in *Belgravia*. (There is another outpost in leafy *Richmond*.) With indoor and outdoor seating this is a perfect spot for a sit down brunch and a natter, a place where Willie Wonka would feel quite at home. Mr. Curley is a fantastic pastry chef, awarded Britain's Best Chocolatier by the Academy of Chocolate for five consecutive years, 2007-2011. There were glossy Maybachs and Bentleys parked outside so we knew something good was happening inside. And indeed there

was: toffs with their damsels were munching on mille-feuilles with some of the Rothschild Bordeaux wines (and Sauternes, Burgundies, Reislings and Pinots from the world over) and close at hand, aristo mummies from the hood were there with their prams and heirs enjoying a sugar high from unusual ice cream flavors and *gougere* while sipping tea and hot cocoa. Order Bakewell Tarts, and award-winning Rosemary and Olive Oil chocolates, Scottish Heather Honey chocolates and House Dark or Malt Whisky truffles. Curley's wife *Suzue* has added a wonderful injection of Japanese culture throughout, including Green Tea Cakes and White Chocolate with Miso ice cream. Not to mention Apricot and Wasabi chocolates for the more adventurous customer. Patisserie is prepared on a daily basis and William's years of working in French Michelin-starred restaurants account for the exquisite delights including an ever-popular "Mont Blanc," Chocolate Cadeaux and Breton Sables. In addition to the chocolate and patisserie ranges and wide selection of ice cream, also offered is an exciting year-round dessert bar menu at the Belgravia boutique changing on a weekly and seasonal basis. Fascinating classes are often given for the local denizens. There's no end to the quality of Mr. Curley's creations and the setting is all understated blond wood and mirrors. It has a clubby feel and that's the way Sir Evelyn likes it. Visit www.williamcurley.com/engine/shop/index.

CAVORTING AROUND THE *HERTFORDSHIRE* countryside this summer playing hooky from our studies at *Oxford's Christ Church College*, we happened upon the lovely town of *Tring* and an old Rothschild stately mansion that has, for the past 87 years, been home to *Champneys*, England's outstanding health resort. This elegant estate, set within 170 acres of private parkland on the beautiful *Chiltern Hills*, is steeped in history and retains a frisson of the way things were back in the 18th century when butlers ran the show and your valet was the most important person in your life. Thanks to the glamorous *Tanya Whewey* and her late husband *Alan*, heralded as pioneers of the modern health farm movement, today *Champneys* ranks in the first class tier of the world's outstanding spas. And leave it to the beautiful Tanya to develop a program that puts guests on a fast track to looking and feeling fabulous. *Champneys' "Fab@50+,"* a five-night retreat specifically focused on the holistic needs and aspirations of each guest and targeted to those 50 and beyond. Take it from us—Tanya, at 67, looks in her 40's, and now we know why: her program, scheduled for November and the first quarter of 2013, maximizes health, relationships and the pleasures of life with a focus on anti-ageing, nutrition, weight management, fitness, shape and



vitality, skin care and grooming. Tanya goes beyond all this, too, and explores what we think, feel, say and do and how we can get in the driving seat of our life rather than just being a passenger. If well being of mind, body and soul is what you seek in a mise en scene of tranquility and you really want the best out of life, head for Tring and Champneys. The cost of \$1500 covers accommodation, all meals, consultations with Tanya, medical health check, talks and demonstrations, spa treatments, “Five Elements” ritual (a great way to start the day) plus all facilities and up to 20 indoor and outdoor activities. A superb team of professionals from a Medical Director to Nutritionist and Exercise Physiologists to Skin Care Specialists are at hand to make for a perfect experience to relax, reflect, recharge, slow down the ageing process and focus on what you do want and, equally important, what you *don't* want in this next great stage of your life and to leave Champneys with an effective game-plan on how you are going to achieve this. For more information and to book, visit www.champneys.com.

WE ATE SPLENDIDLY IN *LONDON* LAST MONTH: *TAMARIND*, *BAR Boulud*, *Tempo*, *Bellamy's*, *Butler's at The Chesterfield Hotel*, *The River Café*, but if you have only one meal to eat in London, treat yourself to *Dinner by Heston Blumenthal* at the magnificent *Mandarin Oriental Hotel Hyde Park* in *Knightsbridge*. There is nothing like it anywhere. Here is typically British quirkiness and playfulness at its very best. First, the look of the place: the dining room features floor-to-ceiling glass walls that give diners a view of the kitchen and its unique pulley system. Modeled after a version used by the royal court, the pulleys' workings look like the intricate parts of an oversize watch and serve to rotate the spit on an open-fire. The ivory-painted walls are decorated with custom-made porcelain wall sconces in the shape of antique jelly moulds. A wall in the bar area displays British recipes taken from sixteenth-century cookbooks—but, like a conjurer's sleight of hand, these appear and disappear, depending on the light's reflection. Such bespoke details match a refined, precise and playful approach to traditional British cuisine. Chef *Ashley Palmer-Watt* has twenty years of cooking under his toque and was inspired while at Blumenthal's innovative *Fat Duck* in *Bray*. His creative eye for detail coupled with a great enthusiasm for research and British ingredients have enabled him to create a unique menu of historically-inspired British dishes. We chose starters from a selection unlike any we have ever seen: Meat Fruit from



the 16th century was magical and looked like a perfect tangerine but was really Mandarin, chicken liver parfait and grilled bread. Broth of Lamb, circa 1730, revealed an intensely-flavored dish of slow cooked hen's egg, celery, radish, turnip and veal sweetbreads. Rice & Flesh, circa 1390, was a melody of saffron, calf tail and red wine. What's going on here? Some dishes trick the eye, others play with your palate. Hay-smoked mackerel from the 1730s, appears with lemon salad, gentlemen's relish and olive oil. Nettle Porridge, circa 1660 is a complex stew of roast cod, smoked beetroot, garlic parsley and fennel. This is all a wild ride of taste and sensory thrills and a true pleasure of the highest creativity. Some dishes take three days to make and no wonder no less than the Queen of England saw fit to have a party here recently. Dining at Dinner by Heston Blumenthal is an adventure. On to the mains: Roast Turbot, circa 1830, is happily married with leaf chicory and cockle ketchup; Spiced Pigeon, 1780, is cleverly done with ale and artichokes; Black Foot Pork Chop, circa 1820, comes with Hispi cabbage, lardo, ham hock, and Robert sauce. And there is much more: Chicken with Lettuces (1670), Hereford Ribeye with mushroom ketchup (1830), Fillet of Aberdeen Angus, Cod in Cider from a 1940s recipe. We then enjoyed deserts from the 19th century (Topsy Cake), 17th (Taffety Tart), 16th (Tarte of Strawberries) and perfect British cheeses. Service was impeccable, the wines out of this world. Eating this way is not inexpensive but fear not, a recent set lunch menu that included Ragoos of Pig's Ears, Cured Salmon, and Orange Buttered Loaf was priced at \$60, a bargain for such innovation and culinary history. We can easily say with certainty Dinner by Heston Blumenthal is one of the world's best and most creative eating experiences, supremely talented chefs riffing on British food history and delivering big flavors and mind-boggling textures. After a lunch like this it was off upstairs to our splendid digs at the Mandarin, a bright, airy, pastel cocoon recently painted and in top shape with not only gorgeous art and furniture but every technological advance. *Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park, 66 Knightsbridge, London, +44 (0)20 7201 3833, www.dinnerbyheston.com.*

WE LIKE THE IDEA OF HOLIDAY SEASON SHORT STAYS (WITH ATTRACTIVE pricing) at *Rancho La Puerta*, the great fitness spa in *Tecate, Mexico*. Enjoy a bracingly healthy and relaxing few days there if you can't stay a full week. Three night and four night stays are welcome starting November 17. The holiday season at the Ranch is magical. *Luminarias* light the pathways and walls. Fireplaces wink warmly at the cool night air, while daytime temps are still "shirt-sleeve." And the pools and mountains beckon. Call (877) 440-7772 and ask for Holiday Shorter Stay. Visit www.rancholapuerta.com.

THE MOST EXCITING TRAVEL BLOG TO HIT THE INTERNET IN MANY MOONS is *The Travel Curator*, a creation of public relations dynamo *Melanie Brandman*, a glamorous Aussie-turned-New Yorker who is on top of the world's best and hidden hotels, spas, resorts and shops. Each month Melanie and her team of sleuthing stars share their discoveries with stunning prose and photography. Melanie is passionate about travel and she loves to share her finds. She loves the gorgeous and the gritty, the luxe and the laid back, as long as it is quality-driven. A recent issue titled "In The Wild," dealt with the Pacific Northwest and all of its treasures—hotels, sights, night life, shopping and restaurants. You can rely on The Travel Curator to navigate the world properly and best of all, it's free. If you want to get in on the inside, to learn about inspiring destinations from an expert globetrotter, this is the place to go. The Travel Curator cuts through the clutter and affords access to tried and tested favorites, the latest travel trends, and word-of-mouth travel tips from Melanie and her globetrotting friends. Do not hesitate to go to www.thetravelcurator.com immediately and join in on the fun.



THE YEATMAN IN OPORTO IS A LUXURY WINE HOTEL AND MEMBER OF *Relais & Châteaux*, that blends the supreme Portuguese tradition of hospitality with a uniquely British flair for understated and stylish comfort. In the middle of the historic center of *Vila Nova de Gaia* yet set in six acres of gardens, each of the 82 individually decorated rooms and suites has a breathtaking view of the *River Douro* and the UNESCO World Heritage City of Oporto. In addition to its gastronomic and vinous attractions, the stunning property is an oasis of calm, featuring a luxurious *Vinothérapie Spa by Caudalie*, renowned for its patented treatments and products derived from the other natural benefits of grapes. The gourmet restaurant at this luxury wine hotel is the proud recipient of the prestigious *Wine Spectator 2012 Best Of Award of Excellence*. The Yeatman joins the ranks of only two other restaurants in Portugal that have received this level of distinction. The Yeatman's restaurant was recently awarded a Michelin star and its impressive wine cellar boasts the largest collection of Portuguese wines in the world. Wine Director *Beatriz Machado* and her knowledgeable team have amassed more than 1,200 selections and work closely with a group of 67 "wine partners" to ensure the finest selections from the top Portuguese producers. Visit www.theyeatman.com.

WHETHER FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE, MANY PEOPLE ON YOUR GIFT list will be traveling. Jet setting can be a pain, so get them some gifts that will make the trek easier. Travel can disrupt routines and keep you from falling asleep—especially when crossing time zones or sleeping in a hotel. *NightWave* is a simple, natural and easy-to-pack solution to relax the body and help you fall asleep easily. Nightwave (www.NightWave.com) focuses the mind and regulates breathing to elicit a natural relaxation response in the body and help you fall asleep. A small device for your nightstand, it uses a soft blue light to silently guide your breathing and mind. The device weighs only six ounces and the traveler version comes with a convenient travel case. Just \$49.95.

BIAGGI HAS INTRODUCED A STYLISH LINE OF FOLDABLE LUGGAGE which is more than just luggage. It's the cure for clutter. High-end travel products are one thing, but how many admit that one of their greatest features comes to life when the traveler is NOT traveling? Biaggi does just that, with stylish, expertly-engineered bags that fold to a convenient size to make much-needed room in closets, organized garages, attics, beneath the bed and even in hotel rooms and cruise cabins *during* trips. For more info on the *Biaggi Contempo* line go to a quick video showing how it folds: <http://www.biaggi.com/how-it-folds-upright.html>.

THE FOLKS AT *VIRGINIA COCKTAIL PEANUTS* HAND-PREPARE PREMIUM peanuts from the fertile fields of Virginia where the world's finest peanuts grow. These peanuts stand out far above all the rest we have tasted. Choose from the following tastes: milk chocolate, dark chocolate, toffee, sea salt, cajun, jalapeño or unsalted. These peanuts are not cheap, \$5-7 for a 5 ounce tin plus shipping and handling. But they are worth every penny. Visit www.mvsbest.com.

HOT TYPE: I CAN SEE MY SHOES AGAIN: A HUMOROUS YET Sarcastic Journey to Better Health by *Water Scott Allen* is a frank and funny slender book full of genuine insight that will give you the skinny on a no-nonsense health regimen that leaves no margin for martinis or associated backslides. And, even in the face of these dramatic lifestyle changes, Allen demonstrates that there is still plenty of room for fun. Motivating by example, and delightfully non-judgmental, this pragmatic book always keeps it real—so that anyone can enjoy true results and a healthier future. And for the young ones: what child hasn't wished to have his or her

own dragon or to fight the great fire-breathers? PEGASUS-A Dragon's Tale by *Gina LoBiondo* is the delightful, heartwarming story of two young bear cubs and the dragon they find that changes their lives forever. It's a sweet, precious story that children of all ages will love, with adorable characters and a simple but moving plot. The main theme is the deep friendship of the three characters, a friendship that transcends both time and species. PEGASUS is a 34-page large print paperback, illustrated in color by *Stephanie Zuppo*, \$10. Published by *Nephtys Publications*. EVERY WOMAN'S GUIDE TO ROMANCE IN PARIS, *Square One Publishers*, \$16.95, provides a roadmap to the trip of a lifetime in the City of Light. Author *Caroline O'Connell* shares her insiders' knowledge of the very best that Paris and its environs have to offer—including lunch upstairs at renowned wine store *Lavinia*, attending a free fashion show at *Galleries Lafayette*, intimate museums where you can end your visit with afternoon tea in a *salon*, and spending an evening at one of the hot new jazz clubs. Caroline also has a detailed section on the *Champagne* region that gives tips on where to stay (including the luxurious *Les Crayères*), what Champagne houses to tour, and where to dine. There is no better person to pilot you around Paris than Caroline.

WE WANT TO CELEBRATE HOW THE SERVICES AT *INTERNATIONAL Currency Express* can benefit you when you travel. Everyone who travels internationally will need local currency as soon as they arrive at their foreign destination. Airports and hotels charge excessive rates and fees, most credit cards add a 3% finance fee and ATMs are not always readily available. Arriving prepared with local currency on hand is definitely the way to go for both practical and financial reasons. This is why we always contact International Currency Express before we start our journey. They make it so easy to obtain currency at the best rates. Their retail office is conveniently located in Beverly Hills and they also ship nationwide. Their rates are extremely competitive and customer services are unsurpassed. Call toll-free at (888) 278-6628 and they will be pleased to answer all your questions and assist with orders. *International Currency Express, 427 North Camden Drive, Suite G, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, www.foreignmoney.com.*

MANY PEOPLE MAKE THE MISTAKE OF BUYING THE MOST INEXPENSIVE vodka available because they think that they won't taste it in their mixed drink. But we know from experience that pure, high quality vodkas actually bring out the other natural flavors in the mixes, making an overall tastier drink. Lower quality vodkas hide the mixes' flavors

and in the end, taste less than desirable. It's simple: the purer the vodka, the more true the cocktail's identity. *Canadian Iceberg Vodka Corporation* is the largest premium Canadian-owned vodka brand. Since 1995, this ultra-premium vodka has been made by combining pristine water harvested from icebergs off the coast of Newfoundland with triple-distilled neutral spirit made from sweet corn grown in *Ontario*. Sold by all the major provincial liquor control boards in Canada as well as by distributors in the United States and worldwide, Iceberg is marketed as the "World's Purest Vodka." We agree.

FINE WINING: THROUGH THE YEARS, *V. SATTUI* WINES HAVE EARNED the highest recognition in both national and international competitions. From 2009 through 2012 alone, V. Sattui was awarded an astounding 309 Gold Medals, tops in the nation, with more than 12 wines rated 90 points or more. And ten times in the last decade V. Sattui was voted "Winery of the Year" at some of the most prestigious wine competitions in America. We love their *Pinots Noirs, Chardonnays, Cabernets, and Sauvignon Blancs*. Founded in 1885 by *Vittorio Sattui*, today V. Sattui Winery is the only winery in *Napa Valley* with its own extensive deli offering house-made prepared foods from salads to charcuterie to pastas, pizza, and barbecued fare and over 200 cheeses from around the world. Visitors can assemble a picnic and enjoy it outdoors under the centuries-old oak trees on the winery grounds. V. Sattui is both family-friendly and dog-friendly. Visit www.vsattui.com.

DISNEYLAND'S CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE THEME PARK WENT FULL-THROTTLE this June with the debut of *Cars Land*, a 12-acre addition based on the animated Disney-Pixar movie *Cars*. The park opens to a realistic model of Route 66, full of the exacting detail Disney is famous for at its parks, with nostalgic fifties-era diners, juke joints, and a restaurant disguised as a weathered motel forming the backbone of *Radiator Springs*, the setting for the popular automobile-obsessed film. The atmosphere is transporting enough, but you're here, of course, for the Cars-inspired rides, which include three. Two are of the county fair variety, including *Mater's Junkyard Jamboree*, which whips you around a circle in delirious motions, and another, *Luigi's Flying Tires*, is bumpers-car with a twist that finds you flying around on giant inflatable tires with the options to throw balloons at your fellow riders. The most impressive is *Radiator Springs Racers*, a thriller that puts you into a racecar, complete with all your favorite Cars characters, to compete in a realistic checkered flag race around an impressive recreation of a Southwest desert scene, reaching fast but safe speeds around hairpin turns with random results as to

which car will win. In addition to the impressive world of Cars Land, California Adventure recently added an additional new area dedicated to Hollywood's Golden Age, complete with a new restaurant named and themed after Los Angeles' long-gone-but-not-forgotten *Carthay Circle Theater*, that includes upscale dining from *Napa Rose* chef *Andrew Sutton* and a staff of 92 that is each trained at the first level of sommelier. Disney, as always, has upgraded its Disneyland-adjacent theme park with something cool for everyone, adults, teens and children. Cars Land will impress all three. Visit www.disneyland.disney.go.com/disneys-california-adventure/cars-land.

CELEBRATING TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF OCEANSIDE VACATION GETAWAYS, September marks the silver anniversary of *Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa*. One of the quintessential Southern California resorts, located in beautiful *Dana Point* on an elevated bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the resort has been charming guests since 1987. To commemorate this anniversary, Laguna Cliffs is offering a room rate savings of 25% per night with a \$25 resort credit, per stay, to be used toward dining or spa services during the month of September. Blackout dates may apply. Package elements are nontransferable, and package does not include any taxes or gratuities. To learn more about the Silver Anniversary Package or book the special rate using booking code W06, visit www.lagunacliffs.com or call (949) 661-5000. The resort was originally called the Dana Point Resort and was constructed with iconic Victorian-style architecture and striking red-roofed turrets visible from miles away. The resort is rich with surfing history that has influenced the spirit of Laguna Cliffs Marriott with its "California casual" attitude, sophisticated yet accessible resort offerings, and even an authentic 1940 "Woodie" automobile, complete with surf boards on the roof, displayed in the main valet of the resort. In 2010 the resort experienced a dramatic reinvention with all public areas, rooms and pool areas undergoing an extensive renovation, refurbishment and redesign. The breathtaking results created an unparalleled resort experience and a feeling of rebirth that was steeped in community and tradition.

IF YOUR VACATION PLANS CALL FOR A VISIT TO AN IDYLIC SETTING ON THE banks of one of the most picturesque rivers in America, then consider a visit to *TuTu'Tun Lodge* (www.tututun.com) on the *Rogue River* in southwestern *Oregon*. The motor trip along Highway 101 from Bandon south to Gold Beach is a magnificent warm-up for your visit, and if you're traveling north along 101, you won't be disappointed, either. The dramatic coastline offers unforgettable ocean views and pristine beaches. Once at the lodge, seven

miles up the river, one is greeted by young, charming owner, *Kyle Ringer*, and his superbly trained staff. Sixteen rooms, two suites and three homes (ideal for families) feature the best in linens and accessories. A number of rooms offer soaking tubs on the outdoor decks and many are equipped with indoor fireplaces. The beds will whisk you into blissful sleep. It is easy to see why *Travel+Leisure Magazine* recently named this retreat as number two in the world for small lodges. The well-tended gardens are vivid; you'll no doubt see deer munching on fruit trees on the small onsite putting course. At meal time, breakfasts are hearty; lunches can be packed for a day's excursion; and family-style dinners around tables of eight are outstanding. The evening meal is preceded by drinks and tasty hors d'oeuvres served at the bar and on the outdoor deck. Jet boats leave every day from the nearby dock, giving passengers many a thrill on a river trip where bear, deer, beavers, otters, osprey and eagles are common sights. Fishermen relish casting on the Rogue and families may even feast upon fresh catch for evening meals. Also ranked among the best in the world, links golf is available on oceanfront courses at nearby *Bandon Dunes* (www.bandondunesgolf.com). ENTREE has been coming here for years; the place only gets better. But hurry, fall openings are limited. The place operates as a bed and breakfast during the winter season (November 1-April 30).

STORIES TO LOOK FOR IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: *AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES* gets our compliments for their commitment to upscale cruising with their intimate ships, exceptional service, and plenty of immersive experiences—all at great value for the money. *Vienna* and a visit to the elegant, newly refurbished *Hotel Sacher* and the *Hotel Sofitel Stephansdom*. The charms of *Croatia* along the eastern edge of the Adriatic. Doing *South Africa* in style with *African Travel*. Holiday options offering escorted journeys with quality, comfort and style by *Insight Vacations*. *Club Glove's* American-made *TRS Ballistic* collection, a rugged line of rolling and carry luggage. *Brendan Vacations* delivers a delightfully “beyond the expected” journey “Beyond the Expected: New Discoveries with Gems of Northeastern Europe,” that focuses on the extraordinary Russian cities of *Moscow* and *St. Petersburg*. Lastly, we wine and dine at *The Feathers* in *Woodstock, England* and have a memorable culinary experience at *The Mark Restaurant by Jean-Georges* in *New York*.

NEW THIS FALL SEASON, *THE RESORT AT PELICAN HILL* IN *NEWPORT Beach* introduces an expanded series of etiquette classes for children, young adults and ladies. As the holiday entertaining season approaches, local and visiting guests may choose from a variety of

fun, interactive courses designed to enhance their repertoire of protocol, manners and poise. Led by Founder and President of the *Etiquette School of Beverly Hills-Newport Beach*, *Kathleen Cover*, each program covers a variety of topics, such as favorable first impressions, the art of conversation, dining protocol, writing thank you notes, and travel etiquette. Offering a positive approach to personalized interactive learning, intimate class sizes range from six to 12 students. The resort-based etiquette program provides the perfect setting for students of all ages to enhance their knowledge and practice of social graces. Etiquette programs available at Pelican Hill during the fall season include: Ladies' Etiquette Luncheons; Mother-Daughter Social Etiquette Tea; Children's Etiquette Classes; Young Ladies' Etiquette Classes; and Young Gentlemen's Etiquette Classes. Open to local guests and resort guests alike, classes are held at Pelican Hill. Exclusive same-day offers for golf, spa and dining will be available for parents of children or young adults enrolled in a class. Reservations may be arranged by calling (800) 820-6800 or (949) 467-6800. Additional details are available online at www.pelicanhill.com. Pelican Hill features: 128 two-, three- and four-bedroom villas with magnificent coastal views and an unparalleled array of appointments, immersing guests in the absolute finest of everything; 204 luxuriously appointed bungalow guest rooms and suites with private terraces; a rejuvenating five-star spa with a menu of the world's most celebrated therapies; world-class restaurants, including *Andrea* serving authentic Northern Italian cuisine; an iconic "Coliseum Pool," one of the largest circular pools anywhere with tiered decks and luxurious cabanas; and Pelican Hill Golf Club with 36 dramatic holes, nearly all with ocean panoramas. Achieving one of the highest travel ratings in the United States, The Resort at Pelican Hill has earned the 2013 AAA Five Diamond Award for the fourth consecutive year since opening nearly four years ago. In celebration of the harvest season, The Resort at Pelican Hill will presents its annual *Festa dell'Autunno*, an autumn festival taking place over the first weekend of November this year. From live art and entertainment to authentic Italian fare and olive-inspired spa indulgences, the traditions of Italy come alive at Southern California's own Tuscan seaside village. Inspired by 750 mature olive trees, the second annual Festa dell'Autunno marks the third annual pressing of Pelican Hill's signature olive oil. Credit Pelican Hill Managing Director *Giuseppe Lama* for this celebration. Signor Lama grew up in a small Northern Italian town and he makes sure the fall season at Pelican Hill is the perfect time for friends and family to gather outdoors and celebrate the mild Mediterranean climate, idyllic coastal setting and locally grown seasonal cuisine.

WE APPLAUD THE CONSIDERATE WAY *THE PENINSULA BEVERLY HILLS* treats the hard working road warrior. Conveniently located near *Century City, Santa Monica* and other business hubs in *Los Angeles*, The Peninsula Beverly Hills revolutionized business travel when they introduced 24-hour check-in, luggage storage and the only hotel concierge at LAX. Now, just after completing a year-long renovation of all 193 guest rooms, suites and villas, they're making business travel even easier. Whether you're booking a single room or a suite, the hotel's new *Executive Privilege* experience invites guests to enjoy discounted airport transfers and a host of complimentary amenities, including LAX concierge service, early arrival and late check-out, American breakfast, suit and shirt pressing, shoe shine and more. Executive Privilege highlights include: daily American breakfast for one; pressing of one suit and shirt per stay; one shoe shine per stay; discounted LAX transfers at \$89 per trip; airport concierge services for inbound travelers; early arrival and 4 pm late check-out and complimentary local calls. Valid until December 31, 2012; rates from \$510 for a Superior Room. To reserve the Executive Privilege experience call (800) 462-7899 or e-mail reservationpbh@peninsula.com.

COME OCTOBER, *PARK HYATT* WILL OPEN A CONTEMPORARY AND dynamic hotel in *Chennai, India* offering discerning business and leisure travellers their new personal address in the city. We expect the gracious, personalized Park Hyatt service will weave through an elegant ambience, creating the warmth of a private home. Located next to the governor's residence, alongside the *Guindy Forest Reserve*, this serene sanctuary is within good proximity to the airport and prime business districts of the city. We are told landscape inspired by flowing landforms lead to a serene lily pond and courtyard situated at the heart of the hotel, while the contemporary artwork program tells a unique story through Chennai's rich cultural heritage as the textile hub of Southern India. Dining at Park Hyatt Chennai's restaurants will offer a multitude of experiences ranging from refined and tranquil to dramatic and vibrant. A floating oasis, the *Spa at Park Hyatt Chennai* will feature a rooftop pool with dramatic views of the Guindy National Park and the Natural Forest Reserve. The hotel's 201 luxurious large rooms have been thoughtfully designed to create an inviting environment. Rich travertine marble floors and plush hand-tufted rugs are just some of the luxuries guests can look forward to. Every guestroom features luxurious appointed marble bathrooms with large wet-areas. In addition, all suites feature luxury stone plunge tubs. As for dining, *The Dining Room* overlooking the lily pond and outdoor terrace, is designed to give guests the sense of a refined private bungalow. Serving Western

and South Indian food with seasonal menus in a residential style setup, The Dining Room will also offer a signature afternoon tea service. *The Flying Elephant* is the specialty restaurant at Park Hyatt Chennai, a sensory experience that every seasoned gastronome will delight in. This multilevel, dynamic and trendy lifestyle restaurant features cuisines from different parts of the world in one menu. A complete theatrical experience, the Flying Elephant, with multiple show kitchens will stimulate not just taste buds, but all of the senses. Elevated above the dynamic hustle and bustle of the city, *Antahpura Spa* at Park Hyatt Chennai is a serene retreat, a respite from urban hyperactivity and a state of solitude and silence. An inner sanctum of six well-appointed rooms, a mix of the world's most sophisticated therapies integrated with the traditional healing practices of Chettinad, an infinity roof top pool and luxurious wet areas featuring steam sauna hot and cold plunges complete the experience of absolute bliss. *Sphere*, the gym studio, is located on the topmost floor with panoramic views of the city. Equipped with specialized cardio and strength training machines, the fitness centre will also offer customized services and lifestyle packages under the guidance of a trained team. Park Hyatt has been active in India. Earlier this year, they opened in the hi-tech city of *Hyderabad, Park Hyatt Hyderabad*, the first city Park Hyatt hotel in Southern India. With 42 fully-serviced luxury apartments enjoying five-star facilities in addition to its exceptionally designed guestrooms, suites, restaurants and meeting and event spaces, the modern eight-story hotel was designed by the renowned architecture firm of *John Portman & Associates* and includes 185 guestrooms and 24 spacious suites. Stylish and contemporary interiors feature Indian motifs and henna patterns, while silk and vibrant colors add a Sari-inspired element. The city's first five-star serviced apartments attached to a hotel, *The Residence*, offer an exclusive "home away from home" experience at Park Hyatt Hyderabad. Each of the bright and airy 42 apartments are fully furnished, offer city or atrium views, and come fully equipped with high-end kitchen appliances and complimentary wireless Internet. All restaurants at Park Hyatt Hyderabad are designed with interactive show kitchens which are central to the guest experience. The hotel's signature restaurant, *Tre-Forni*, serves light and flavorful dishes from Northern Italy's Veneto, Lombardia and Liguria regions. For a traditional Indian menu, the formal *Dining Room* offers light and flavorful Hyderabadi dishes, as well as classic European favorites. For a quick snack, the *Living Room* offers the hotel's signature selection of freshly prepared macarons and other French pastries, with a range of elegant Western and Indian-inspired high teas. Head to the *Oriental Bar and Kitchen* to meet friends or business associates for drinks



and tapas-style South East Asian comfort snacks. The royal Nizams of Hyderabad never had it as good as pampering in *The Spa*, where an enticing bouquet of result-oriented beauty and wellness therapies are given. The ingredients used in the creams and lotions include saffron and pearls, and tailor-made products from *Good Earth* as well as other exclusive items from *Aromatherapy Associates*. The first venue in the city to feature the “Hydra Facial” treatment, other services at The Spa include a Swedish sauna, steam room, beauty salon, and fitness center featuring a temperature controlled swimming pool and the latest gym and cardio equipment. Park Hyatt Hyderabad is the first hotel in India to feature Hyatt’s innovative residential-style meeting concept. Named *The Manor at Park Hyatt Hyderabad*, the meeting facilities are designed in a comfortable and welcoming style to reflect the entertainment spaces of private homes. Located just 15 minutes from the technology hub and the business district of the city, and 45 minutes from Hyderabad’s international airport, this contemporary and elegant hotel offers both business and leisure travelers a sophisticated ambience in the heart of upscale *Banjara Hills*. As the financial, economic and political capital of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad is one of the richest cities in India. For more on Park Hyatt, visit www.parkhyatt.com.

THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW *NEW YORK* ALREADY ARE ACQUAINTED with the gem-like *Mark Hotel* on East 76th Street. But fewer know the small, pretty *Surrey Hotel* just across the street. The Surrey is sort of a secret, a polished and understated luxury hotel known to grandees and their coiffed ladies who insist on living well on the Upper East Side. And it is here that we found the *Café Boulud*, an unpretentiously casual yet elegant bistro that is the work of super chef *Daniel Boulud*, whose reputation as one of the world’s greatest is secure, stemming from his haute cuisine restaurant, *Daniel*, on East 65th Street. While Café Boulud has its roots in the perfectionism of Boulud’s faithful devotion to the best ingredients prepared with precision and care, it is a more relaxed place with a freer interpretation of M. Boulud’s style. Yet, the provenance of French-American cooking firmly set on a foundation of tradition, seasonal foods, vegetarian approaches and world cuisine are obvious and emphasized. We enjoyed a very fine lunch there recently. The room was welcoming, cosmopolitan, fresh, quiet and contemporary; the crowd well dressed and polite. We were dazzled with refined cooking, the sort of food Daniel grew up with in Lyon. His protégée, Chef *Gavin Kaysen*, prepares satisfying old world family recipes, tasty regional



specialties and haute cuisine dishes that soar. We chose from a menu that offered classic French dishes under the heading “La Tradition;” seasonal market-driven creations from a section called “La Saison;” fragrant vegetarian plates (“Le Potager”); and exotic flavors of the world from the “Le Voyage.” Plates were composed like miniature works of art. We began with Maine Peekytoe crab with cara cara oranges and a cilantro, cucumber and avocado sauce, perfect for summer. A soup of petit pois was heavenly. What next, we asked? On to a crispy duck breast, tender and redolent of herbs with riso nero mushroom fricassee and a Madeira sabayon. A perfectly done striped bass *en paupiette* was hinted of the sea yet was delicately Meurette sauced. The New York strip was juicy and tender in a bone marrow crust and sauce au poivre. All delicious, all proper, all, dare we say, fabulous. We could have had rabbit, scallops, Vermont poulet—the menus are wide-ranging and balance on an admirable tightrope of subtle ingredients like Fiddlehead ferns, fennel, capers and cheeses. Yet nothing here is too tricked up or overwrought. Service was crisp yet unobtrusive. No request was too small or too large not to be met with a smile. The wines are fairly priced, selected with care and poured with affection. Count on sommelier *Blue Pilkington* to expertly match budget with your tastes. You can lunch very nicely at Cafe Boulud on an a la carte basis with main courses mainly in the \$20-\$30 range. They have a thoughtful prix fixe menu (two courses \$37, three courses \$43) and dinner entrees are in the \$30s. More extravagant tasting menus are always available. Fanciful desserts by the creative *Noah Carroll* are sublime. One of Café Boulud’s attractions is a popular prix fixe brunch. And on warm days a few tables are set up on the sidewalk. After a glass or two of rose, you would swear you are in Paris. *Café Boulud, 20 East 76th Street, New York, (212) 772-2600*. Ask for the attentive General Manager *Dominique Paulin* or sharp-eyed Maitre d’Hotel, *Jan Sedlack*, who are graciously devoted to their guests.

WE CANNOT IMAGINE A MORE BEAUTIFUL WAY TO SPEND AN EVENING than an al fresco dinner at *Whist*, the fine restaurant at *Santa Monica’s* popular *Viceroy Hotel*. Tucked away on a cozy garden poolside terrace, illuminated by tons of candles and filled with the promise of culinary adventure, Whist attracts the pretty people of the Westside in search of innovative cuisine, tip top service and overall excellence. Our recent experience there was sheer pleasure, thanks to a new menu that showcased the many talents of Executive Chef *Tony Di Salvo* and Chef de Cuisine *Chris Crary* whose ideas of cooking for 2012 gourmets is smaller plates of flavorful, fresh combinations fresh and organic from the Farmer’s Market.

These artfully composed creations never disappoint. We started with delicious cast iron-roasted corn bread with maple butter and wines by the glass from a diverse, interesting, well-priced list (order by the glass, quartino or bottle) that also includes a roster of exotic craft beers. On to tiny bites of sea urchin and then Dungeness crab crostini with sea salt and lemon lardo that hinted of the sea. Grilled octopus came with cous cous, chickpea panisse and a tahini vinaigrette. An ethereal corn ravioli held dungeness crab, pancetta, chanterelles and heirloom tomato. Tender scallops were accompanied by fennel, celery, treviso and bottarga salad, caper, lemon and basil vinaigrette. Scrumptious sides included Thai curry-braised baby carrots, sweet peas, mint and basil; and a to-die-for roasted corn in miso butter, bacon, chilies, lime, and scallion. Gently spiced lamb meatballs were doused with orange and yogurt and studded with pistachios. We



worked our way through baby artichokes with lemon and honey, sugar snap peas with radishes and wasabi, and a creamy burrata with favas. As the sun went down, the music sensually pulsated. We could have easily been in St. Tropez or Mykonos with gentle laughter rising glissando on the soft air. A celestial ricotta gnudi with chanterelles, brown butter, pine nuts, spinach and lemon was as light as a cloud. Potato gnocchi with asparagus and morels was divine. What followed were plates bursting with complexity: broiled halibut with smoked potato-miso puree; juicy sweetbreads with morels and sherry. Desserts hit the right ending notes, a rhubarb tart with walnut crumble and vanilla ice cream, a subtle chocolate tart with orange sherbet. You cannot beat the warm local cherries that are paired with honey-almond ice cream and a crispy waffle. We credit the dazzling restaurant manager *Laura Dove* for orchestrating the magic here, a true symphony of creative seasonal cooking, precise friendly service (our waiter, *Warren*, was a trooper, hauling plate after plate of food and glass after glass of wine to us with a sense of humor and confident knowledge) and casual sensual atmosphere. Whist explodes the myth that a hotel restaurant is boring. This place is full of energy, full of creative zip and brimming with the inspired flair of two deft chefs who truly know their stuff. Good ingredients don't come cheaply, but Whist is more than fairly priced with bites starting at \$4, pastas from \$15 and fish and meat dishes from \$15. Visit www.viceroy santamonica.com. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. We took the elevator up to our attractive contemporary room at the hotel, fully satisfied and dreamed the dreams of very contented people.

Our Favorite Travel Agent: Vivian Taylor

Vivian Taylor is a travel agent who combines personal passion for travel with real boots-on-the-ground experience and confident knowledge about destinations to exceed the clients' expectations. She has a deep commitment and expertise to design travel experiences that match unique hopes and ambitions with seamless execution. When you talk to Vivian, you have a pro on your case—superior know how, quick reactions, superb followup, detail orientation, impeccable contacts and unfailing dedication to her clients-24 hours a day. At her side is Jeff Rodgers who provides equally devoted client attention. No wonder so many high profile travelers turn to Vivian Taylor for their travel needs. Contact Vivian Taylor International, (302) 945-7255; mobile: (310) 497-2650; (323) 270-6748; Fax: (302) 945-7266; e-mail: vivian@vivantaylor.com.

Your Seaside Home Away From Home: Pelican Hill

Set on 504 acres by the Pacific Ocean in Newport Beach, Pelican Hill features 128 two-, three- and four-bedroom villas with magnificent coastal views and an unparalleled array of appointments, immersing guests in the absolute finest of everything. There are 204 luxuriously appointed bungalow guest rooms and suites with private terraces; a rejuvenating five-star spa with a menu of the world's most celebrated therapies; world-class restaurants including Andrea serving authentic Northern Italian cuisine; an iconic "Coliseum Pool," one of the largest circular pools anywhere with tiered decks and luxurious cabanas; and Pelican Hill Golf Club with 36 dramatic holes by Tom Fazio, nearly all with ocean panoramas. Pelican Hill is perfect for a getaway or a longer stay. Their Villa Luxury Extended Stay Program is the ideal solution for a variety of home transitions. Come for a week, a month or longer during an extensive home renovation, restoration due to fire or water damage, a job relocation or long-term-term vacation. A turn-key program makes moving-in simple and takes the hassle out of finding a temporary residence. All of the two, three, and four bedroom Villas are beautifully furnished, plus fully equipped down to the house wares and linens. An overview of Villa features: private terrace furnished with chaise lounges and a dining table with chairs, great room with wood-beam ceiling, casually elegant residential furniture, spacious dining areas and limestone fireplace. There is a kitchen with all cookware, small appliances, dishes, glassware, silverware, Wolf appliances, Sub Zero refrigerator and wine cabinet, granite counter tops and fruit wood cabinetry. The master suite features spacious bath with marble walk-in shower, deep soaking tub and double basins. Most secondary bedrooms have adjoining baths with marble walk-in shower, deep soaking tub and double basins. (Some offer double queen beds.) Technology includes 50 or 60" flat-screen television with DVD player in the great room, 45" televisions in bedrooms, wireless Internet, Bose sound system and MP3 port. All have in-Villa washer & dryer, private one or two-car garage, turn-key phone & utility services. The Luxury Extended Stay Program also offers complimentary services, such as concierge and personal grocery programs. And there is access to a world-class spa, fitness center, golf course, Coliseum Pool, in-room dining, coach services and more. Among the resort's 128 Villas, the Extended Stay choices include two-bedroom residences starting from \$7,900 monthly; three-bedroom residences starting from \$15,500 monthly; and four-bedroom residences starting from \$23,000 monthly. Visit www.pelicanhill.com

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