

ISSUE 46 FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017

# Let's Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE AND LEISURE TRAVELLERS



Mile High in  
DENVER

AUSTRALIA  
Kimberley Coast

A food guide to  
VIETNAM

MONACO  
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## from the editor

There are (depending on who you believe) 196 countries in the world today. How many have you been to? I constantly have this 'discussion' with my cousin, who lives in London. She regularly brags that she has been to more countries than I have. Trouble is when I went to Yugoslavia it was 1 country...today it's 6 and that's what my cousin hangs her hat on!

I travel to the U.S., on average, twice a year...and I love the place. The diversity of the 50 states - it's like 50 unique countries rolled in to one. Let's hope it stays that way! And I have been lucky enough to go to places as diverse as Portland (Oregon), New Orleans, Memphis, Chicago, Orlando and San Francisco to name just a few.

Over the past few years we have also seen in excess of a 10% year-on-year increase in the number of Americans visiting our fair shores...and long may that continue.

So, despite what is happening at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, in Washington D.C. (ironically a city I will be visiting for the very first time later this year), Let's Travel will continue to promote the U.S. of A. in all it's (Old) Glory.

But let's not forget the other 195 countries that we could promote in Let's Travel. In this issue Roderick Eime shows off the beautiful Kimberley region in northern Western Australia, Shane Boocock continues his RV trip through Utah, Liz Light has a fun, foodie tour of Vietnam and first-time contributor, Rawdon Christie, excels in showcasing Hawai'i. Me? I get to mingle with the rich and famous in Monaco.

Live long and prosper!!!



Gary Dickson  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Grand Casino in Monte Carlo,  
Monaco  
Credit: Robyn McKenzie

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“In a time of domestic crisis, men of goodwill and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics” John F. Kennedy 1917 - 1963 (35th President of the United States of America)

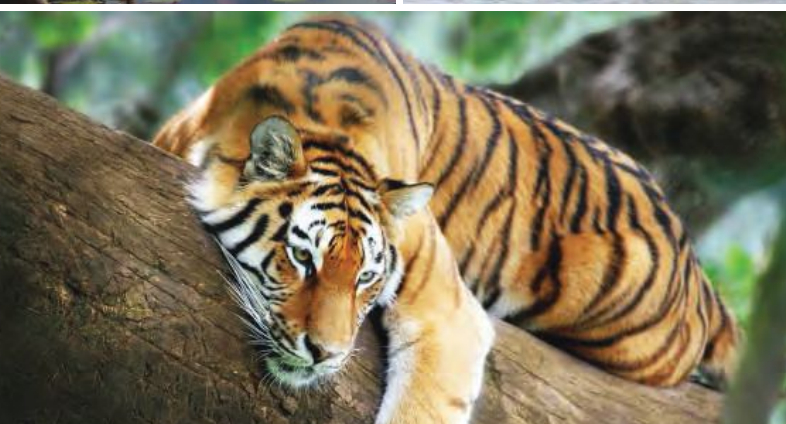
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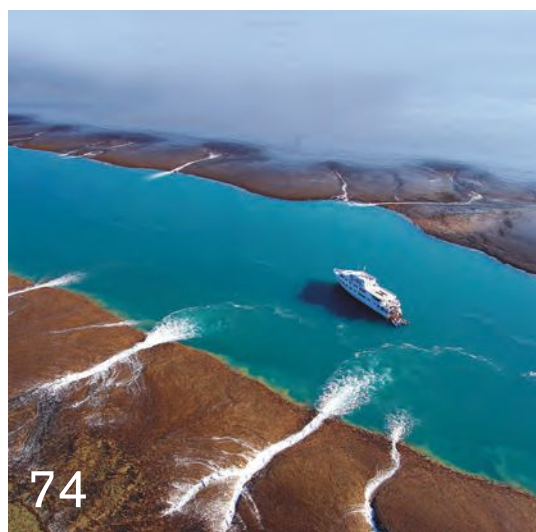


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# Let's Travel

THE MAGAZINE FOR CORPORATE  
AND LEISURE TRAVELLERS

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Destination  
Monaco

# Welcome to the House of Grimaldi

By Gary Dickson

“This is going to be the best six minutes with your clothes on you’ve ever had,” said my new Scottish friend sitting in our Monacair helicopter as we were about to lift off from Nice airport. Destination? Monaco...renowned principality of the rich and famous...and me!





RAINER BRUNOTTE



My Scottish friend was 100% correct. The view as you rise above the dedicated heli-pads at Nice Airport is only surpassed by the view as you come in to land (exactly six minutes later) in Monaco. In between is some of the most stunning coastal scenery you're ever likely to see.

It had been 10 long years since I had visited the world's 2nd smallest country...and I had missed it immensely. It rates in my personal Top 5 Places to Visit.

Whilst it's true that you can almost smell the money on the Monegasque population as you stroll the streets and laneways of Monaco (Did I just see Roger Federer?), I have always found them very friendly and willing to offer a helping hand if you're lost or simply want to ask for a dinner recommendation... although it's pretty hard to get lost in an area a little over 2 sq.kms.

Adjoining the famous Monte Carlo Casino (at the top of the hill on the eastern side of Monte Carlo) is a great place to sit and watch the world and people (tourists and locals alike) go by. Café de Paris may not be the cheapest place to enjoy a cold ale and lunch, but it is well worth the value of location alone.





Throngs of tourists stop to take a picture of the casino, akin to the one on the cover of this issue, and many venture inside to try their luck. Even if you're not a gambler a walk through this majestic building alone is worth a few minutes of your time.

Once you get your orientation – not hard in Monaco...sea, mountains, city in between, then plan to venture out and see what are deemed the five main attractions in this stunning country.

**1 Monte Carlo Casino and Opera House:** Built in the late 1800's and designed by the same man (Charles Garnier) who was the architect on the Opera in Paris, the atrium entrance is paved in marble with 28 columns of onyx. The auditorium of the opera is decorated in red and gold and the gaming rooms comprise numerous rooms featuring stained glass windows, sculptures and bronze lamps. It is definitely worth the 10 Euro entrance fee. (Over 18's only and ID required) [www.casinomontecarlo.com](http://www.casinomontecarlo.com) and [www.opera.mc](http://www.opera.mc)



Opera House exterior

## 2 Oceanographic Museum:

This exceptional museum is dedicated to all things oceanographic – along with its aquarium where you will see some of the world's rarest marine species, and wonder in awe at the 450 cubic metre Shark Pool. Adults 13 Euros and kids 6.50. Allow 2.5 hours. [www.oceano.mc](http://www.oceano.mc)

**3 Monaco Cathedral:** Built with the stark white stones from La Turbie in 1875, this Roman-Byzantine-style building houses the burial places of past sovereigns, including Prince Rainier and Princess Grace. Entry is Free.

**4 Prince's Palace:** Guardian of an ancient tradition, this Palace, located in a unique setting upon the "Rock" of Monaco, was built on the site of a fortress erected by the Genoese in 1215. Today the splendours of this Palace can be admired by all, such as its Italian-style gallery and its 15th century frescoes; its Louis XV lounge all in yellow and gold and its blue room, a harmonious blend of glorious blue and gold. Adults get in for 8 Euros with discounts for younger visitors. Savings can be had by coupling the entry fee with the Oceanographic Museum.



Prince's Palace



### facts:

Gary flew to Nice (via London) thanks to the brilliant service and staff of British Airways. British Airways fly daily from Sydney to London (via Singapore) and onwards to many other European destinations, including Nice. [www.ba.com](http://www.ba.com)

Monacair supplied return flights from Nice – Monaco Heli-port. Return flights cost 280 Euros per person and flight time is six minutes. [www.monacair.mc/en](http://www.monacair.mc/en)

Gary stayed the L'Hermitage hotel whilst in Monaco [www.hotelhermitagemontecarlo.com](http://www.hotelhermitagemontecarlo.com)

## Monacair:

Ever since it was established in 1988 the company MONACAIR has accumulated a vast amount of unique experience in terms of V.I.P transportation, serving customers who are in search of personalised and high-quality services. Its permanent quest for know-how and quality led to MONACAIR being bestowed the prestigious title of Official Suppliers to S.A.S the Sovereign of Monaco since 1999.

Since then MONACAIR has taken care of all helicopter transport for the Princely Family of Monaco, the Government of Monaco and several Chiefs of State visiting the Principality.

MONACAIR is also the only Monegasque company designated by the Government of Monaco to operate a regular scheduled service between Nice airport and Monaco heliport.

The regular transfers between Monaco and Nice Airports take approx. 6 minutes and upon arrival in the Principality, a private shuttle will take you in comfort to any place of your choice in Monaco in only 5 minutes.

Their regular flights are (most of the time) operated with Airbus Helicopters type H130 single turbine 6 places T2, and all helicopters are brand new, air conditioned, with a fleet of six.  
[www.monacair.mc/en](http://www.monacair.mc/en)



**5 Fort Antoine:** This early XVIII century fortress, built on the northeastern tip of Le Rocher (The Rock), is now used as a marvelous outdoor theatre with a capacity of 350 spectators in tiered seating built in a semi-circle. In this enchanting setting, high quality performances are given during the summer season. It's free to wander around but there are charges for the performances.

However long you have (or haven't got) in Monaco, plan your days. The streets can be hilly in parts so you don't want to go to one place only to find your next venture is on the other side of the principality.

If you're planning to use Nice, or other parts of southern France as your base, then utilise the train service from Nice to Monaco – like everything here, it's fast, efficient and you won't have to endure a taxi ride from Nice with someone called Henri or Jean-Pierre.

So...take a wad of Euros...enjoy the food, architecture, museums, scenery and people...and relax... take in the ambiance of one of this planet's most enduring countries. I strongly suspect that Prince Albert's lineage will still be ruling this fascinating slice of Europe in another 700 years...I just wonder what sort of shape the helicopter transport will take in the year 2700 AD.

[www.visitmonaco.com](http://www.visitmonaco.com)



Hotel Paris

# Europe's Top 5 Scenic Rail Journeys

Railbookers, tailor-made rail journey specialists, share their top recommendations for scenic rail journeys in Europe.



## 1 Swiss Lakes and Mountains:

Switzerland is a veritable treasure trove of scenic rail journeys. In the summer months the verdant pastures roll lusciously from the edge of the tracks into the horizon, in the winter the country unfolds like Narnia. Travel from Montreux to Interlaken on the Golden Pass Line. Rise up over Lake Geneva, gaze in awe at the Swiss Riviera, plunge through a mountain tunnel and coast through resorts like Gstaad and Châteaux d'Oex. Hit the high point (over 1,274 metres) before Zweisimmen and snake through the Simme Valley. Perhaps stopover in Interlaken and take a trip to Europe's highest railway station at the summit of Jungfrauoch.





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## 2 Norway in a Nutshell:

This is a route with no 'off-season': snow-dusted in winter, set ablaze by autumn hues, verdant and sleepy in the spring and sparkling in the summer. Norway in a nutshell combines the Bergen Railway, the Flam railway, the Aurlandsfjord, the Nærøfjord and the Stalheimskleiva road. Hard to pronounce, easier to enjoy, the route is possible in a day but turning it into a holiday with a night or two in Oslo is well worthwhile. From Oslo it is full steam ahead over the Flam railway, descending deep into the fjord along the world's steepest regular-track railway line. You drop 861 metres in an hour as the panorama shifts from grand mountains to sparkling waterfalls – it's a short journey, but there won't be a second to take your eyes off the window! Experience Swedish wildlife with a husky sled and snowmobile in winter or river rafting and cycling in summer.

## 3 London to Fort William:

Depart Euston one evening, doze off after a wee dram of whiskey and wake up the next morning across the border. It is civilised, time-effective and harks back to a different, more romantic era. And then there is the scenery. Fall asleep traversing London's suburbia and wake up seemingly in the middle of nowhere, the sun glinting through the blinds and deer bounding past the window. After exploring Fort William, the real treat begins.

Often voted one of the world's most picturesque rail journeys, you will catch glimpses of crofter's cottages, tiny churches, the pristine coastline and deep green mountain panoramas, before crossing the Glenfinnan Viaduct famous for its starring role in the Harry Potter films.

## 4 Germany's Rhineland:

Leaving from Brussels board a high-speed train to Cologne before delving into the German countryside. Board a train winding down the Rhine Valley through luscious greenery to Koblenz, abundant with palaces, churches, fountains and a real 'old world' charm. Cruise

down the river or take a daytrip to historic Rudesheim, before heading up the Moselle. The tracks are paved through the heart of the Rhineland-Palatinate and trace the riverbanks along the Moselle Stretch from Koblenz to Trier – Germany's oldest city – which boasts a UNESCO-listed Cathedral and a picture perfect market square. After you have explored, continue on to the fairytale landscapes of Luxembourg to complete your holiday.

## 5 Munich to Verona via the Brenner Pass:

Combine some of Europe's most stunning cities with rail travel as scenic as any of Europe has to offer. The Bavarian capital of Munich plays host to every delightful Alpine cliché imaginable, which of course means you will find the finest surrounding mountain passes. There are fast trains that will take you from here to the Austrian skiing capital of Innsbruck, but why sacrifice scenery in favour of time when you are on holiday? Skirt around the bases of the Alps, meander past glittering lakes and glide through the resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen on the regional train instead. Lap up the snow dusted, mountainous views before taking to the tracks once more, this time past the vineyards and mountains of the Brenner pass to Verona. 🇩🇪

[www.railbookers.com.au](http://www.railbookers.com.au)



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Destination  
Denver, Colorado

# Events Time is Any Time in The Mile High City

In the summer of 1858, a small group of prospectors from Georgia crossed the great plains of the Colorado Territory and made a region-changing discovery at the base of the Rocky Mountains... gold!!! And although not much of the precious metal was found, the mere whisper of the word was enough to start a veritable stampede into the region.



Today, the rich ethnic history and diverse cultural heritage of the city are celebrated with a number of events throughout the year, from the nation's largest Cinco de Mayo celebration in the spring to the Longs Peak Scottish Irish Festival in the fall. Summer brings the Colorado Gay Rodeo and Denver PrideFest, a celebration of community and culture. The historically rich African-American Five Points neighbourhood is home to the Black American West Museum (3091 California St.), while the Museo de las Americas (861 Santa Fe Dr.) hosts some of the world's top contemporary artists from Latin America. A trip to The Mile High City will find no shortage of year-round events to inspire and enjoy:

### Star Wars™ and the Power of Costume

**Date of Event:** February thru to April 2, 2017

**Where:** Denver Art Museum

**Website:**

[www.PowerofCostumeDenver.com](http://www.PowerofCostumeDenver.com)

**Description:** Take a unique journey into the Star Wars™ universe as characters are brought to life through a dramatic presentation of more than 70 original costumes.

### Denver Restaurant Week

**Date of Event:** February 24 – March 5, 2017

**Where:** Throughout Denver

**Website:**

[www.DenverRestaurantWeek.com](http://www.DenverRestaurantWeek.com)

**Description:** Denver Restaurant Week is a 10 day celebration of the culinary scene in Denver. Hundreds of participating restaurants will offer multi-course dinners at three different fixed prices: \$25, \$35 and \$45 per person.



Acorn Restaurant

### Vikings: Beyond the Legend

**Date of Event:** March 10 – August 13, 2017

**Where:** Denver Museum of Nature & Science

**Website:** [www.VISITDENVER.com](http://www.VISITDENVER.com)

**Description:** Experience a myth-busting exhibition that has captivated a million people around the world. Marvel at the Viking culture's surprising refinement, complexity and achievement.



## Red Rocks Summer Concert Series

**Date of Event:** April - October, 2017

**Where:** Red Rocks Park & Amphitheatre

**Website:** [www.redrocksonline.com](http://www.redrocksonline.com)

**Description:** No summer in Denver is complete without at least one trip to the awe-inspiring Red Rocks Amphitheatre, flanked by enormous red sandstone rock formations. Check out the star-studded concert schedule and get your tickets early.

## Calder: Monumental

**Dates:** April 28-September 24, 2017

**Where:** Denver Botanic Gardens

**Website:** [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org)

**Description:** American artist Alexander Calder is considered one of the most influential sculptors of the 20th century and is known for his bold energetic sculptures. Don't miss the iconic works of Calder: Monumental at the Denver Botanic Gardens.



Calder: Monumental

## Denver PrideFest

**Date of Event:** June 17-18, 2017

**Where:** Civic Center Park

**Website:** [www.VISITDENVER.com](http://www.VISITDENVER.com)

**Description:** Discover PrideFest in the heart of downtown Denver. The two-day celebration includes family activities, live music, a festive parade, dancing and entertainment. Show your pride in The Mile High City.



Red Rocks Summer Concert Series



## Denver Beer Fest

**Date of Event:** September 29 - October 7, 2017

**Where:** Throughout Denver

**Website:** [www.DenverBeerFest.com](http://www.DenverBeerFest.com)

**Description:** Denver Beer Fest features nearly 200 beer related events at area breweries, restaurants, tap houses and attractions, and concludes with The Great American Beer Fest, the premier U.S. beer festival and competition.



### Mile High Holidays

**Date of Event:** November 15, 2017 – January 21, 2018

**Where:** Throughout Denver

**Website:**

[www.MileHighHolidays.com](http://www.MileHighHolidays.com)

**Description:** Denver comes to life during the holiday seasons, with millions of twinkling lights, festive parades, seasonal performances, special events and much more. Plan your unforgettable holiday getaway.

### National Western Stock Show & Rodeo

**Date of Event:** January 7-22, 2018

**Where:** National Western Complex

**Website:**

[www.MileHighHolidays.com](http://www.MileHighHolidays.com)

**Description:** The National Western Stock Show is a nationally recognized western heritage and entertainment event with one of the world's richest regular season professional rodeos, one of the country's largest horse shows and a western trade show. 🇺🇸

[www.denver.org](http://www.denver.org)



### Denver Arts Week

**Date of Event:** Nov. 3-11, 2017

**Where:** Throughout Denver

**Website:** [www.DenverArtsWeek.com](http://www.DenverArtsWeek.com)

**Description:** Discover seven vibrant art districts and more than 300 unique events across music, theatre, film, dance, museums and more – including Denver Film Festival and FREE Night at the Museums.

### Frozen

**Date of Event:** August 2017

**Where:** Denver Center for the Performing Arts

**Website:** [www.denvercenter.org](http://www.denvercenter.org)

**Description:** From Disney comes the beloved tale of two sisters torn apart and their journey to find themselves and their way back to each other. Be among the first to see this highly anticipated new musical before it makes its Broadway debut!





Destination  
Denver, Colorado

# Denver International Airport

Connecting you to Denver, Colorado and Beyond





Denver International Airport (DEN) is not just a gateway to great skiing or hiking in the Rocky Mountains or great arts and culture in the Mile High City, it is an experience that can add to the journey of your next holiday. You can take advantage of DEN's convenient connections to hubs in North America and Europe or even take time to explore the great city of Denver itself. Either way, DEN will offer you a unique passenger experience with a taste of Colorado.

With the third-largest domestic network in the United States, DEN offers you quick access to destinations from California to New York and everything in between. And DEN can connect you to more than 20 international cities in

eight countries, including non-stop flights to major international hubs in Munich, Frankfurt, London and even Reykjavik, Iceland. In fact, DEN was named a top-five global mega-hub in 2016 for its unparalleled access to markets around the world and you can experience these connects by traveling to and through DEN.

What is even more convenient is the fact that DEN is located in (almost) the geographic centre of the United States, making it easy for you to explore Denver, the nearby mountains and then fly to America's East or West Coasts or even to destinations in Canada and Mexico in only a few hours.

No matter if you are flying to Denver or connecting to another destination, DEN is dedicated to



Connecting the Westin Denver International Airport and the Jeppesen Terminal is an 82,000-square-foot open-air plaza. The DEN plaza frequently plays host to events you can enjoy such as mini golf, ice-skating, local markets, local brews at a beer garden, watching free movie screenings and other activities that reflect the season.

After you have had an opportunity to explore DEN, you can hop aboard the new commuter rail line that connects the airport to downtown Denver in just 37 minutes. With a quick ride, you will have access to even more dining, shopping, arts and cultural activities and, of course, the great Rocky Mountains.

These services and more have made DEN an international favourite among travellers. In 2016, the Skytrax World Airport Awards named DEN as the No.1 Best Regional Airport in North America, and was the highest rated among U.S. airports in the categories of best airport in North America, best domestic airport and world's best regional airport. DEN's staff, who strive to welcome and delight you throughout your airport journey, have also received consistent praise among passengers for being among the best in the country. ■

[www.flydenver.com](http://www.flydenver.com)

providing you a safe, efficient and enjoyable passenger experience from arrival to departure. The airport continues to add exciting new shops and restaurants that tempt you with a variety of local flavours and international brands that passengers love. Denver-based restaurants such as Root Down and Elway's add a flair of the Mile High City's thriving food scene, while new duty free shops offer an expanded line of luxury goods for international visitors to bring home at a reduced price. Another exciting upcoming addition is Tivoli Brewery and Tom's Urban Kitchen, an on-site brewery that will feature exclusive craft beers, along with stunning views of the airfield, train station canopy and the open-air plaza. In total, the airport now offers more than 140 shops and restaurants.

DEN also provides you with other upgraded passenger essentials such as the recent addition of 10,000 electrical outlets to charge up personal devices and free Wi-Fi access that was recently ranked as being the fastest in the country. The airport also boasts the largest canine therapy dog program in the U.S., with 60 friendly dogs who roam the concourses in search of passengers to surprise and delight before or after a flight. These four-legged companions are a huge hit with passengers from around the world. And DEN recently opened three new pet relief areas on each of the concourses. These rooms provide a clean, convenient place for travelling

pets to do their 'business on the go'. All of this added up to the American Kennel Club naming DEN the top airport in the country for people travelling with dogs.

And we must not forget the 519-room Westin Denver International Airport hotel that opened in 2015 and is located adjacent to the iconic Jeppesen Terminal and its white, tented roof. The 433,000-square-foot modern hotel includes 35 suites with sweeping views of the Rocky Mountains, as well as a 37,500-square-foot conference centre that offers hotel convenience like no other venue in the United States.

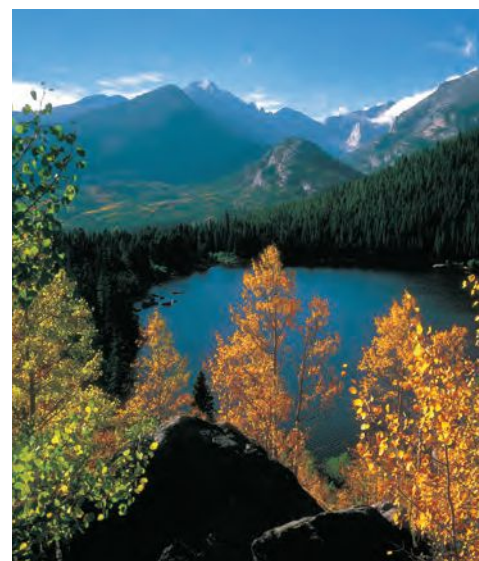




# DENVER, COLORADO

*Gateway to the Rockies and the American West*

Experience one of America's most vibrant and walkable cities, with spectacular views of the Rocky Mountains, outdoor cafés, farm-to-table cuisine, local breweries serving craft beer and plenty of shopping! Exploring the city center is now easier with direct rail service from Denver International Airport to Denver Union Station. Discover Denver's creative side at the Denver Art Museum with its famous American Indian and Western art collections, see a concert under the stars at Red Rocks Amphitheatre or take a day trip to Rocky Mountain National Park. Find out more at [VISITDENVER.com](http://VISITDENVER.com)





Destination  
New England, USA

# Great reasons to visit New England

New England offers an incredible array of things to do and places to visit...the hardest part is choosing your favourites! Whether your passion is skiing, boating, golf, music, art, history, festivals, family fun or romantic seaside weekends, you'll find it in New England. So read on, learn and start planning your next New England getaway.





## 1 A Pint of the Best...Breweries:

The biggest revolution in New England since 1776 has to be the rise and rise of the microbrewery. In the six states of New England, you are never far from a good brew. Try Big Claw Pilsner or Ginga' Ninja, Pumpkin Eater Ale and Wolf's Breath Winter Warmer, check out The Vermonster or the complex Three Peak Holiday Stout that is barrel-aged on French-roasted Kenyan coffee beans, no less! What makes New England beers so interesting for enthusiasts is the way that brewers respect tradition but admire innovation. Alongside the IPAs, stouts, brown ales and organic lagers, brewers are happy to experiment with natural New England ingredients, such as wild blueberries, cranberries, maple syrup and pumpkin. Small breweries are so popular that every state now has a beer or brewery trail of some kind. See the best of New England's beer festivals at the end of the article.

## 2 New England's Romantic Covered Bridges:

What could be more romantic than a covered bridge? New England (especially Vermont) has them by the score. Some are just for walking across a river; others are also for cycling. A surprising number are on roads, providing motorists with a brief "back in time" experience. As to why covered bridges were built, some reckon that the roofs protected the beams from rotting, or from freezing in bad weather. Others

## New England festivals

Great New England Beer Festivals: The six states all host beer festivals and Oktoberfests, where you can taste the "Best of the best" under one roof. Here are some of the most popular where live music and food are all part of the fun.

1 Great International Spring Beer Festival, Providence, Rhode Island (May 1, 2017) 250+ craft brews.

2 The Connecticut Craft Brewers' Beer Festival, Naugatuck, Connecticut. (May 2017) The state's longest running beer tasting event celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2014; 50 breweries and brew pubs, 200+ craft brews.

3 - New England Brewfest, Lincoln, New Hampshire (June 23-25, 2017) Includes 30+ of New England's top microbreweries.

4 15th Annual Schnitzel Fest, Hillsborough, New Hampshire, September 23rd 2017, a German food festival with local brew and wine bars, oom-pah music and classic fall foliage.

5 Martha's Vineyard Craft Beer Festival, Stone Bluff, Massachusetts (September 2017) This festival will feature 50 breweries and more than 150 craft brews to sample.

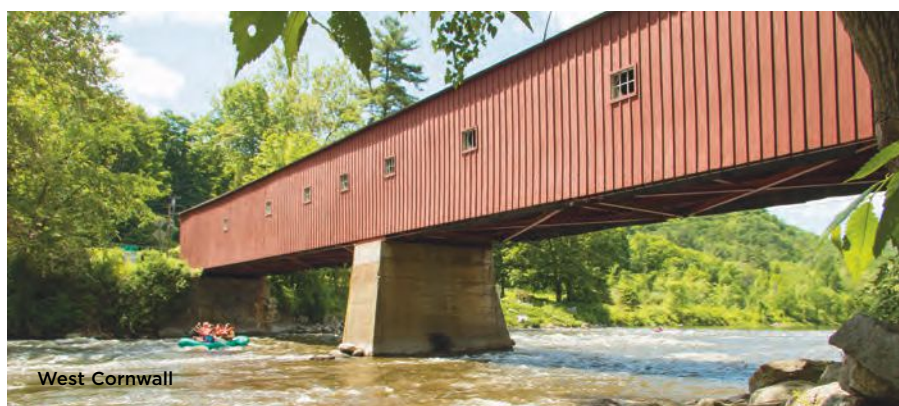
6 Acadia's Oktoberfest Food & Crafts Festival, Southwest Harbor, Maine (October 6, 2017) 88 brands of Maine's finest beer and wine, plus all-day music.

7 Newport's International Oktoberfest: Newport, Rhode Island (September 2017) A bona fide Bavarian weekend.

8 Stowe's Oktoberfest: Stowe, Vermont (October 2017). An annual celebration of the harvest and fall foliage.

[www.discovernewengland.org](http://www.discovernewengland.org)





## Great New England Bridges

Connecticut's famed photogenic bridges include Bull's Bridge, built in 1842. Find it just off Route 7, West Cornwall, to the north, off Route 7, and Comstock, on Route 16, not far from East Hampton.

Maine still has nine covered bridges. The most photographed is also the most painted: the 1872 Artist's Covered Bridge, near Newry, four miles northwest of North Bethel, off Route 26 this 87-foot (26m) bridge is no longer open to traffic, so it is a quiet spot to set up a tripod or an easel. By contrast, the shortest bridge in the state is Lovejoy, off Route 5. It's just 70-feet long (21m) and crosses the Ellis River at South Andover.

Massachusetts only has a handful of covered bridges that survive, but those that do still evoke the past. A short drive north from Greenfield, Pumping Station Bridge is a 95-foot (29m) span over the Green River. Among the many historic buildings at Old Sturbridge Village, you can see the covered bridge that once stood in Dummerston, Vermont before being dismantled, transported and re-erected here.

Of New Hampshire's 54 historic registered covered bridges, one has earned the nickname, "The Honeymoon Bridge." The 1876 Jackson Covered Bridge that spans the Ellis River takes honeymooners and lovers to the classic White Mountain village of Jackson. This is a setting that has held onto its charm since the days of steam trains and horse and buggies.

Rhode Island has only a few covered bridges, but the Swamp Meadow Covered Bridge was a real labour of love. A replica of an early 19th century structure, it was built by volunteers in 1994. The timber was logged from nearby forests and the 40-foot-long (12m) bridge straddles Hemlock Brook, north of the small town of Foster, just off Route 94. Even newer is the bridge in Lincoln Woods State Park, inaugurated in 2005. Drive through it as you enter the park, in the Blackstone Valley.

Vermont boasts a whopping 106 covered bridges. The Vermont Covered Bridge Museum is the world's first and only museum dedicated to this kind of structure. Find it at the Bennington Center for the Arts, near the town of Bennington. The museum features everything from bridge designers and build-your-own bridges to artwork and movies about covered bridges, and Bennington County itself has five bridges that are still in use. Open to vehicles and pedestrians after 130 years, the Warren Covered Bridge crosses the Mad River in Warren, in the heart of the Green Mountain state.

say that, since these bridges look like barns, animals would cross without fear. Whatever the reason, these distinctive crossings are a much-loved part of the New England landscape. See the best of New England's bridges at the end of the article.

## 3 New England's History and Heritage:

Nowhere else in the United States will you understand and appreciate just how America began. Walk the Freedom Trail, visit a recreated Pilgrim village, or walk on the first battlefield of the American Revolution. History is around every corner in New England and these places make learning about it truly enjoyable. When it comes to the story of America, New England is a history book brought to life. For people from other countries, a visit provides insights into the American character. From the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers to charming villages, whose British names and architecture recall Old England — yet they are considered "traditionally American". Stand where the Colonials did as they challenged British soldiers and started the American Revolution. See where America's Industrial Revolution (and the Literary Revolution) began. And for all travellers a history-themed vacation in this region is a whole lot of fun!



**4 Living History Museums:** New England's living history museum experiences will take you back in time with "role players" portraying historical figures and everyday colonists, where museum staff are dressed in period costume and sometimes speak in the dialect of the time. Step into the tribal quarters of Native Americans, or walk the deck of the Mayflower II, a replica of the ship that brought the first Pilgrims to the shores

of New England. A must see sight is the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, where the 1773 anti-tax protest became one of the most famous events in American history. All is explained at the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, an exciting living history attraction, with replica 18th-century vessels and costumed interpreters. See the best of New England's Living History Museums at the end of the article. ❖

## Living History Museums

**Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum:** In the dark of night, Bostonians disguised as Native Americans creep onto three ships in Boston Harbor – and throw hundreds of cases of tea overboard.

**Plimoth Plantation:** When the Pilgrim Fathers settled in New England, their first community was in Plymouth, Massachusetts. That's why Plimoth Plantation takes you back to 1627. Not only are the buildings, the gardens and the food authentic, but the costumed Pilgrims never leave 1627, never step out of character. This really is a time machine experience.

**Wampanoag Homesite:** is by contrast, the Native Americans that you meet here really are members of the Wampanoag Nation. Talk about their heritage; go into a wetu (home) and smell the sobaheg (stew).

**Mayflower II:** The Voyage that Changed the World: in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the costumed passengers and sailors aboard the Mayflower II talk about 'Olde' England and their 66-day trans-atlantic voyage. Learn about the 1620 voyage and navigation in the 17th-century. Hear about life aboard the tiny vessel and how the 102 passengers fared. What you see is a detailed replica built of solid oak 50 years ago.

**Old Sturbridge Village:** Everyday Life in the 1830's in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, the largest outdoor history museum in the northeast bustles with energy: coopers make barrels, farmers tend heritage cattle, blacksmiths hammer out horseshoes. As well as visiting 59 historic buildings (including working water mills and covered bridges), you can take an active role: bake bread in a brick oven, roast meat in a tin reflector oven, mull spiced cider in the hearth.

**Mystic Seaport Maritime Museum:** Along the scenic Connecticut coast is the nation's leading maritime museum. Explore American seafaring history firsthand as you climb aboard four historic tall ships, stroll through a re-created 19th-century coastal village or watch a working preservation shipyard in action. Take a carriage ride through the gardens in summer, or come in December for a holiday lantern stroll. In the Preservation Shipyard, see antique vessels being restored using traditional methods and tools, or rent an historic rowboat to test the waters of the Mystic River yourself.

**Minute Man National Historic Park:** Once a year, in and around Concord and Lexington, Massachusetts, you can travel back to April 19th 1775 and the start of the American Revolution. On Patriot's Day weekend, British Redcoats and farmers march to the North Bridge in Concord. To see drill and musket firing demonstrations, cooking, life in the British Camp, 18th-century surgical demonstrations, and more, visit the 18th-Century Encampment of Militia and British Soldiers and colonial life at the Hartwell Tavern and Smith House.



# Maine The Pine Tree State

## Top Five Things To Do

Acadia National Park



## 1 Visit Acadia National Park:

Acadia National Park comprises an impressive 47,000 acres of land on Maine's Mount Desert Island, Isle au Haut and the Schoodic Peninsula. The park is most known for its undeniable beauty with a unique landscape that includes mountains, lakes and the rugged Downeast coastline. Home to a variety of wildlife and recreational activities from hiking to rock climbing, the park boasts some of the greatest views and activities in the state. Visitors can't miss Cadillac Mountain... the first place along the east coast you can witness the sun rise.



## 2 Sail on a Windjammer:

Discover Maine's mid-coast and islands aboard an historic schooner. Take in the views of quaint harbours and the hustle and bustle of working waterfronts, lighthouses and the breathtaking views of the coast from the water. If you want, you can pitch in and help with hauling in sails and coiling ropes. The crews are entertaining and passionate about their lifestyle, and the food is prepared fresh and tasty. There is also plenty of time to relax and keep an eye out for porpoises and whales along the way, with nothing to intrude except the sound of the vessel's flapping sails.

## 3 Experience Portland's Dining & Beer Scene:

With more than 200 restaurants scattered along the cobblestone streets of Portland's oldest and walkable neighbourhood, The Old Port, it's easy to find award-winning restaurants, local hidden gems, pubs nestled in restored historic buildings, street food and, it wouldn't be Maine without lobster shacks! It's not only the food that's exceptional - it's the drinks too. Maine's pure water yields some of the most diverse and quality

microbrews and spirits, making local breweries and distilleries with tasting rooms a popular destination. With wine bars, taverns and a lively nightlife to add to the list, Portland is a must-see (and taste) stop in Maine.



## 4 Pedal to Lighthouses:

From the seat of a bike, take in panoramic coastal views, whilst pedalling your way to some of Maine's most iconic lighthouses on a Summer Feet 5 Lighthouse Bike Tour. Along the way, whilst overlooking Casco Bay, learn about Portland's history and satisfy your hunger with one of Maine's best lobster rolls. The well-mapped five-hour tour is rated as easy, and one of the best ways to take in several lighthouses in a short span of time. Not only are maritime icons picturesque, they each offer a unique history and story.



## 5 Paddle in the 100-Mile Wilderness:

For adventure lovers, travel in to the Maine woods to experience pristine wilderness - surrounded only by lakes, streams, trees and wildlife. The wildest section of the Appalachian Trail, stretching from Monson to Maine's highest peak, Katahdin, offers some of the greatest paddling opportunities and unspoiled scenery in the state. From a canoe or kayak, explorers can take in this area within Baxter State Park by day and camp alongside the rushing waters by night, providing an unplugged, "off the grid" retreat. ■

[www.visitmaine.com](http://www.visitmaine.com)

A family of four is hiking on a wooden boardwalk that runs alongside a massive, moss-covered granite cliff. The father, wearing a blue jacket and a green backpack, is looking down at the path. The mother, in a pink shirt, is also looking down. A young boy in a yellow shirt is looking towards the camera, and a young girl in an orange shirt is walking ahead of him. The boardwalk has wooden railings and is built over a rocky stream bed. The cliff face is rugged and covered in green moss and ferns. The scene is set in a lush, forested area.

# New Hampshire The Granite State

Top Five Things To Do



## 1 Find your adventure:

In New Hampshire, an adventure could be as tame as moose-spotting or as intense as extreme backcountry skiing. No matter what your preference, everyone is encouraged to get off the main road and go deep into nature. In the coast, you can go Atlantic deep-sea fishing. Hiking and surprising landscapes inland draws visitors from around the world. New Hampshire boasts records including having the country's oldest hiking trail, the world's largest indoor surfing tank, and the world's first mountain climbing train. There are few places on Earth where adventure crosses paths with local heritage like this.



## 2 Shop Tax- Free:

That's correct...there is NO Sales Tax in New Hampshire! The price you see is the price you pay and you will be pleasantly surprised. Finding sales of the most well-known brands at major outlet centres is a daily occurrence. Looking for something more local? New Hampshire's League of New Hampshire Craftsmen and New Hampshire Made are two organizations with retail stores throughout the state. New Hampshire is most famous for its historic and quaint downtowns that are filled with cafes, galleries, and artisan shops so you could easily stumble into a gorgeous surprise in the countryside.

## 3 New England Cuisine:

Right off the tree and right out of the Atlantic Ocean – doesn't get any fresher. Some of the state's 'faves' include anything maple, cider donuts, pumpkin, creamy seafood chowders and delicious lobsters. This state loves its farmers' markets, chocolates, meads and brews! Help to harvest your meal's ingredients at a working farm or have a 5-course meal

prepared for you aboard the Café Lafayette Dinner Train. What about an inn-to-inn cookie tour in the mountains or a meal on the verandah of a grand resort? Make food and drink an experiential part of your holiday.



## 4 Sightsee...off the highway:

You can sightsee from the car window by following routes such as the narrated 100-mile (160 km) White Mountain Loop or sightsee in unconventional ways. There are more snowmobile trails than roads in New Hampshire. Visitors also enjoy views only possible from one of New Hampshire's 5 different scenic trains or one of the 12 different small lake, river, and ocean cruises. You might be surprised to learn that every June, bikers converge to sightsee New Hampshire during the oldest bike week rally in the United States, the Laconia Motorcycle Week. Sightseeing is a great excuse to see the countryside.



## 5 Celebrate like a local:

The best way to learn about local culture is to celebrate with the locals. You will listen to musical performers, taste the fried dough and other pastries, be among festive dress and décor, be dazzled by the artists and artisans who try to lure you with their talents, and look up at the same sky filled with fireworks. New Hampshire is fortunate to have events in every season, which makes for a perfect focal point to your holiday. Use the Seafood Festival or Craftsmen's Fair as your excuse to explore everything in this beautiful state. ■

[www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov)



Destination  
Utah, USA

# Utah's Mighty Five

Words and images by Shane Boocock

Standing like a state custodian on the side of the road, the metal sign had a simple message: Welcome to Utah – Life Elevated.

We had reached the state-line between Utah and Nevada. On the opposite side of the road heading west another sign had a different message...Welcome to Nevada HWY 50 America's Loneliest Road. This route had been uniquely dubbed, 'America's Loneliest Road,' in an article published by National Geographic in 1986. The sign commemorated the slogan's 30-year anniversary, a claim that still seems appropriate, as there was no traffic, just grit blowing across the hardened surface from an arid desert.

We were leaving Nevada behind to venture in our El Monte RV into the northern mountains of Utah, to a wilderness area in the Uinta National Forest. An area where black bear roam free and mountain lakes teem with well-fed, fat rainbow trout. Our destination was Moon Lake Resort, a family-style lodging with 17 rustic cabins owned by Bill and Julie Reardon for the last 21 years. The lodge is on the shores of Moon Lake Reservoir in the Ashley National Forest on the edge of the High Uinta Wilderness of northeastern Utah. A place situated at an altitude of 8,087 feet (2,464 m), so the season here is relatively short, usually late May until mid-September.

We arrived on the last weekend of the 2016 season, with many locals already on site to help with the end of season clean up – winterising everything from the 14 foot (4.2m) long aluminium rental boats and outboards to cabins and kayaks. For us it was a time to relax for a couple of days...head out lake fishing and spend a little time with Bill and Julie who we had known since the early 1980's.

There was a stiff, cold breeze out on the lake as we lure-trolled the far shoreline under the glare of a late autumn sunshine. We soon caught a number of undersized rainbow trout with Mark bagging the best fish of the day when he boated a 14in (35.5cm) tiger trout. Other species in the lake included brook trout, cutthroat and Arctic grayling but these were nowhere to be seen. As the sun receded behind the mountains we headed the boat back to shore for some much needed warmth and a big dinner feast at the lodge.



**Bryce Canyon**

As the darkness of night descended on this special part of Utah, 'Wild' Bill lit the end of season 'Burning Moon' beach bonfire with a flaming arrow and the party began.

After a second successful day fishing we said goodbye to our friends with fond farewells and headed south into a better-known part of Utah, the Green River region. Soon we'd be visiting the first of 'The Mighty 5'...the National Parks of Utah. In the small wayside town of Green River we backed into a full hook-up KOA Kampground site to tidy up the RV, plug into mains power and receive some much-needed Wi-Fi time.

Across from our campsite was the John Wesley Powell River History Museum, dedicated to the first man to navigate and chart the full length of the Colorado River. The year was 1869 and this former one-armed Civil War veteran embarked on one of the greatest expeditions of discovery into what was then 'the great unknown'. Located just off I-70, alongside the Green River, a tributary of the Colorado River, we found a fascinating museum displaying historic boats and full-scale replicas, archival photographs, prehistoric Indian artifacts, as well as a 170-seat auditorium featuring an award-winning film, *Journey into the Great Unknown*.

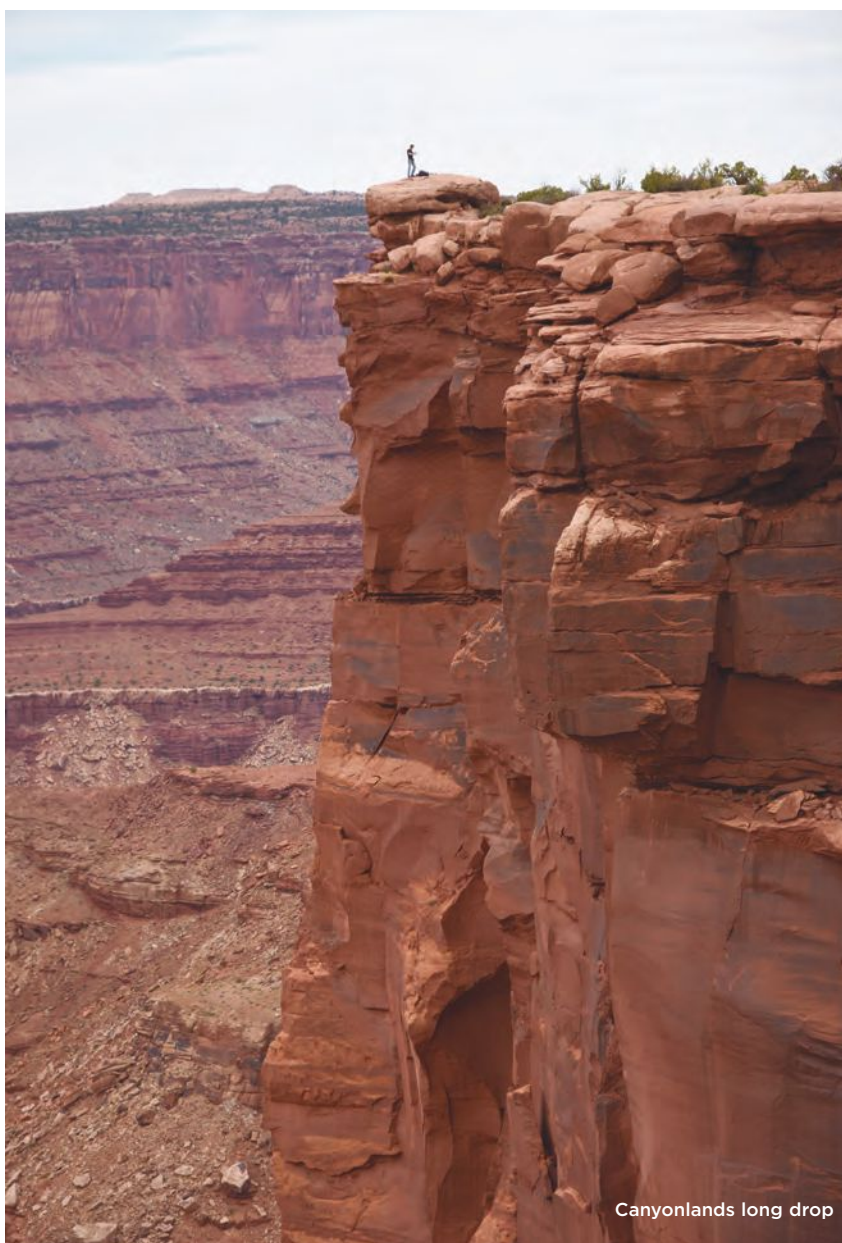
From Green River we had a short drive under grey clouds to the town of Moab, whose city slogan is, 'Where Adventure Begins'.

Canyonlands. Classed as a small resort town, Moab is at the centre of some of the most stunning red rock landscapes on earth, enveloping the cool, muddy-red waters of the Colorado River.

In 1967, Edward Abbey wrote in his best selling book, *Desert Solitaire*, "For myself I'll take Moab, Utah. I don't mean the town itself, of course, but the country which surrounds it - the canyonlands. The slickrock desert. The red dust and the burnt cliffs and the lonely sky - all that which lies beyond the end of the roads." Abbey was writing about the time, 10 years earlier, when he was a seasonal park ranger, in a primitive, hardly visited region then known as Arches National Monument, a desert environment with over 2,000 arches in southwest, Utah.

How that 'hardly visited' time has all changed, even in late September, what we call shoulder season, Arches National Park was busting to saturation point.

It's famed as the mountain biking, boulder climbing, river rafting and trail hiking capital of America. The town also sits on the doorstep of two of Utah's famous 'Mighty 5' National Parks...Arches and



**Canyonlands long drop**



In town the FULL, NO VACANCY signs fronted five out of six private RV campgrounds. To even consider camping inside the park required reservations made at least four to six months in advance for dates between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> October.

Old time cowboys are said to have referred to the many arches and weird sculptures on these high elevation plateaus as, "Nothin' out there, jest a lot of holes in rocks." If you do nothing else take the 30-minute strenuous hike to see Arches main star attraction, Delicate Arch. Standing 85ft (25.9m) high and 65ft (19.8m) wide on the lip of a slickrock bowl, it's been carved by wind and rain from a sandstone reef. Those same old cowboys called the arch, 'Old Maid's Bloomers'.

Roughly 30 miles (48km) from the Visitor Centre at Arches National Park we arrived at the Visitor Centre at Canyonlands National Park. On an overcast day passenger vehicles were lined up at the park entrance; their occupants patiently waiting to gain access to the lofty panoramic views created by the serpentine courses of the Colorado and Green Rivers as they continue to cut open the earth's crust. With half a day to spare we drove the paved scenic road to hike some of the



**Canyonlands lookout**

shorter trails, such as Upheaval Dome before finally reaching the Grand Viewpoint Overlook.

However, if you manage to obtain one of the 12 sites at Willow Flat Campground, available only on a first-come, first served basis, it's only a short walk to possibly the finest sunset spot in the park...Green River Overlook.

After travelling under a rain cloud for about 100 miles (160km) or so from Moab, I asked a freckled-faced Park Ranger, Natalie, at the Natural Bridges National Monument Visitor Centre, what is the difference

between a natural bridge and an arch? "Simple," she said. "A bridge bridges a moving watercourse, and an arch doesn't." In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt established Natural Bridges National Monument, creating Utah's first 'national park area.' Off the 9 mile (14.5km) loop road there are three natural bridges named after Native Americans that once roamed this area, they represent three evolutionary stages: old age (Owachomo Bridge), youth (Kachina Bridge) and maturity (Sipapu Bridge).

Which has the highest span: 220ft (67m) and greatest span: 268ft (81.6m). Short hiking trails lead to the base of each bridge but be sure to carry drinking water, as it gets unbearably hot below the rim.

After crossing the road bridge over the Colorado River near Hite Marina on little used Route 95, we headed west on Route 24 to Capitol Reef National Park. Initially established as a national monument in 1937, it gained full recognition in 1971. An early geologist and explorer named Clarence Dutton described the landscape in the 1880s. "The light seems to flow or shine out of the rock rather than to be reflected from it." Capitol Reef's defining geological feature, over and above the towering cliffs, massive domes, arches, bridges and twisting canyons



Moab KOA Campground Speed Limit



is known as the Waterpocket Fold. It's a 100 mile (161km) wrinkle in the earth's crust that started life as an ancient seabed 280 million years ago. In the subsequent 200 million years, 10,000ft (3,084m) of sedimentary detritus from deserts, inland swamps and riverbeds have since been deposited. What we witnessed as we drove through Capitol Reef was created by three gradual, yet powerful processes - deposition, uplift and erosion - nature at work.

After spending the night at a lakeside campground beside a chilly, windswept Otter Creek Reservoir, we tootled into Bryce Canyon National Park, yet another famous Utah landmark. It was here that Ebenezer Bryce, a local rancher who had settled in the valley below the canyon in 1870, uttered his famous observation about the canyon's unique topography, stating, "It's a hell of a place to loose a cow." The park is famous for the hiking trails that snake down into the canyon between the burnt ember-coloured spires and hoodoos such as The Peek-a-boo Loop Trail, a steep but spectacular hike past the Wall of Windows and the Three Wise Men. Along this trail you might spy a Maguire Catchfly, or the Bryce Canyon Paintbrush, which grows only in Bryce Canyon. The 23 miles (37km) Under-the-Rim trail also descends from Bryce Point and heads south toward Rainbow Point through the less-travelled backcountry of Bryce Canyon.

Under cloudless opal blue skies we descended the next day off the 7,900ft (2,408m) plateau heading south on Route 89 to the turn off for our campground at Coral Pink Sand Dunes. Not far from Kanab, this valley is an off-road enthusiasts playground, a place where the roar of ATVs and trail bikes traverse the windswept, burnished red sand dunes. Thankfully the campground was far enough away so as not to spoil the sound of the desert silence as dusk descended and the night drew cold, as only it can in the desert.

Zion National Park, the last of Utah's 'Mighty 5' national parks we visited was less than an hours drive away in the southwest corner of the state.



**Natural Bridges National Monument**

From the East Entrance Station we drove past Checkerboard Mesa and on through the 5,607ft (1,709m) long, Zion-Mt. Carmel Tunnel to emerge on the western side to monolithic mountain views of The East Temple, The Sentinel and The Alter of Sacrifice.

Blessed with natural art 200 million years in the making, Zion attracts hikers, bikers, photographers, bird watchers and climbers from around the world to its landscape of deep canyons, sentinel-like cliffs, rock mesas and 100 miles (161km) of wilderness hiking trails in the backcountry – a place where visitors can walk in the footsteps of Mormon pioneers and the ancient pueblo people who lived here centuries ago.

At Canyon Junction, Zion's

scenic drive meanders past the steep trail to Angel's Landing, following the indirect twists and turns of the Virgin River all the way to the Narrows, famous for the 'riverwalk', a hike between skyscrapers of deposited red and pinkish sedimentary rock, split open and scoured by grit-bearing waters through layer upon layer of sandstone by the powerful, flood-ravaged river. It's estimated that the river gnaws away 300,000 tons of rock annually. A mile north of the road's end, the canyon shrivels to a withering chasm; in places only a few feet separate walls half-a-mile (804m) high – the celestial sky almost obliterated – yet another marvel of nature to behold in one of Utah's 'Mighty 5' National Parks. 🏡

## facts:

Utah Office of Tourism  
P: +1 800 200 1160  
[www.visitutah.com](http://www.visitutah.com)

Moon Lake Resort  
P: +1 435 454 3142 or  
+1 970 731 9906  
[www.moonlakeresort.com](http://www.moonlakeresort.com)

John Wesley Powell River  
History Museum  
P: +1 435 564 3427  
[www.jwprhm.com](http://www.jwprhm.com)

Arches National Park  
P: +1 435 719 2299  
[www.nps.gov/arch/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/arch/index.htm)

Canyonlands National Park  
P: +1 435 719 2313  
[www.nps.gov/cany/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cany/index.htm)

Natural Bridges National Monument  
P: +1 435 692 1234 (Ext 16)  
[www.nps.gov/nabr/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nabr/index.htm)

Capitol Reef National Park  
P: +1 435 425 3791  
[www.nps.gov/care/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/care/index.htm)

Bryce Canyon National Park  
P: +1 435 834 5322  
[www.nps.gov/planyourvisit](http://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit)

Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park  
P: +1 435 648 2800  
[www.stateparks.utah.gov/parks/coral-pink](http://www.stateparks.utah.gov/parks/coral-pink)

Zion National Park  
P: +1 435 772 3256  
[www.nps.gov/zion/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/zion/index.htm)

United Airlines  
P: 0800 747 400  
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Shane Boocock would like to thank United Airlines for his flights on their new Dreamliner Business Class service from Auckland to San Francisco as well Utah Office of Tourism for assistance during his visit.

El Monte RV  
P: +1 888 337 2214  
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The author would also like to thank El Monte RV for the use of their Recreational Vehicle on his travels through both Nevada and Utah. El Monte offer RV rentals from numerous locations across the United States. They feature the largest number of RV models in the motorhome industry.



Destination  
Las Vegas, USA

# Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino

Las Vegas Glitz on the Las Vegas Strip



One of the most recognisable centrepieces of Nevada's famed Las Vegas Strip, Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, offers a plethora of options encompassing star-studded entertainment, unparalleled shopping, distinguished dining from celebrity chefs and a bustling nightlife beyond reproach.

As one of the trendiest hotels in Las Vegas, Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino makes every guest feel famously hip. The themed resort features Las Vegas hotel accommodations fit for a celebrity A-Lister, and perfect for Hollywood movie buffs. Every one of their Hollywood-bedecked rooms and suites features one-of-a-kind movie memorabilia set against a backdrop of stylish, modern

luxury. When you stay in a Planet Hollywood hotel room with massive suites and dazzling centre-strip views, these colourful, contemporary accommodations ensure that a famed, celebrity lifestyle is as good as debuting on the silver screen yourself.

## Rooms

**Hollywood Hip Room:** is a spacious, modern and stylish 450 square-foot abode, with A-list accommodations including king size beds, luxury bedding, oversized bathrooms, 42-inch plasma television and Planet Hollywood signature furnishings that include fascinating pieces of movie memorabilia throughout.

**Ultra-Hip Room:** the 430 square-foot newly renovated Ultra-Hip rooms are a bright, bold

addition to the Planet Hollywood portfolio, featuring luxury bedding and designer touches throughout... along with convenient extras like mini refrigerators and coffee makers.

**Resort Room:** these 560-square-foot spaces are the perfect choice for the stylish guest. Accommodations include oversized bathrooms with his and hers vanities, picture windows with Las Vegas Strip views, an executive work desk, 42-inch plasma televisions and dazzling décor with impressive pieces of movie history.

**Resort Vista:** provides 570-square-foot of chic luxury accommodations that includes spacious bathrooms with marble floors, his and hers vanities, an oversized bathtub, a writing desk, two 42-inch plasma televisions,

five Vegas Strip-view windows and elements of Planet Hollywood's genuine movie memorabilia.

**Strip Suites:** encompass 850 square-feet with large, open floor plans, a king size bed, a glamorous LV Strip-view vanity with mirror, a spacious bathroom with his and hers sinks, two big screen plasma televisions, a large sitting area with modern furnishings and nightly turndown service.

**Panorama Suites:** sweeping 180-degree LV Strip views from the spacious living room set the stage for the plush Panorama Suite. The 1,255-square-foot floor plan includes a master bedroom with a 36-inch plasma television and separate living area, a master bathroom with oversized soaking tub, a separate dining area with refrigerator and wet bar, and a 52-inch plasma television in the living area. An additional bedroom and bathroom with 500 square-feet can be added to any Panorama Suite.

**Boulevard Suites:** this 1,400-square-foot room is the perfect spot to entertain, featuring a wet bar, lively conversation pit with wraparound furniture and an array of game-room furnishings like bumper pool, ping pong or foosball tables. With one and two-bedroom floor plans available, the master bedroom features a king Sheraton Sweet Sleeper bed for the ultimate in comfort. Additional amenities include oversized lounge-style seating, a separate dining area, one 42-inch TV screen as well as a 50-inch plasma television screen.

**Apex Suites:** contemporary decor meets sophisticated adult playroom in this 1,900-square-foot suite. A more opulent version of the spectacular Boulevard Suite, the Apex Suite offers an additional 500 square-feet to stretch out in. Lively amenities include a variety of game tables, a conversation pit with oversized lounge-style seating, a wet bar and two big screen plasma televisions. Breathtaking, panoramic views make this the sweetest spot to entertain in Las Vegas.

**Mega Suite:** experience the A-list treatment with luxury accommodations fit for Hollywood's



finest. Spanning two-stories, more than 4,000-square-feet and offering 180-degree panoramic views of the Las Vegas Strip, the Mega Suite offers a spa retreat, fitness room, full bar, separate dining room with butler pantry, two refrigerators fully-stocked upon request, individual climate controls and electronically controlled window treatments in each room. Twenty-four hour butler service is also available. The 50th and 51st floors, rooms 5001-5197, recently underwent renovations. Designs were done in-house by Carmen Hemus, FF&E (Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment) Manager and follow

a spacious, modern-contemporary design. Renovated suites include 10 3-Bay, 10 2-Bay, and 46 Single bedrooms and are intended for casino high rollers.

#### **Restaurants:**

Earl of Sandwich serves the ultimate Las Vegas sandwich that is much more than just meat between two slices of bread. The extensive menu at Earl of Sandwich pays tribute to the art of sandwiches with options like the Full Montagu. This delightfully upscale sandwich shop uses only the finest and freshest ingredients and fresh-baked artisan bread.

## facts:

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### The Gordon Ramsay BurGR

menu takes the traditional burger, fries and milkshake comfort food combination to an entirely new level with selections like pork belly bao buns, sweet potato fries with vanilla powdered sugar and pudding shakes—a heavenly combination of thick milkshake and silky pudding. Named the “Best Burger Joint” by InVegas, BurGR boasts more than just an impressive menu. The vividly coloured room seats 200 and is accented by an undulated ceiling, steel and concrete floor, keg display, open kitchen and 30 foot fire feature.

**Koi** serves Japanese-inspired cuisine with California accents offering a variety of savory cooked dishes, traditional sushi and sashimi, as well

as creative rolls. The restaurant is wrapped in a seductive harmony of Asian design elements, combining an exotic Eastern aura with a genuine sense of Hollywood panache.

**P.F. Chang's China Bistro** is one of America's most loved Chinese restaurant chains, a stylish, high-energy bistro that combines unforgettable Chinese cuisine with attentive service. Some of the restaurant's signature dishes include Chang's chicken lettuce wraps, Mongolian beef and oolong marinated sea bass.

**Pin Up Pizza** serves the largest slices on the strip. They use the freshest and highest quality ingredients, and Pin-Up's menu features classic favorites such as

cheese and pepperoni, as well as white, artichoke, margherita and sausage and meatball pizzas. Each hand-tossed pizza pie measures 30 inches across and uses 4lbs of dough, leaving each slice to measure 15 inches long by 6 inches wide.

**Pink's Hot Dogs** is a restaurant chain that is favoured by Hollywood celebrities that is now available on the Las Vegas Strip. Guests can indulge in these gourmet hot dogs and enjoy them by the delicious variations they offer.

**Planet Dailies** is an ever-changing coffee shop and café serving more than 200 items daily. The menu offers Planet Hollywood guests salads, pastas, seafood, steaks, burgers, contemporary Chinese fare, hearty sandwiches and decadent signature desserts.

**Ringer Wings, Pizza and Sliders** brings classic favourites to a sports fan's dream location, just steps away from 33 plasma TVs at the sports book, The Playing Field. Adjacent to the viewing action, Ringer's menu features wings and tenders, all-beef sliders, New York-style pizza, waffle fries and more. The wings and tenders feature classic flavours such as honey bbq and mild, medium or hot wing sauce. More adventurous guests can also choose from unique blends like jalapeno tequila lime, teriyaki pineapple and parmesan garlic.

**Spice Market Buffet** offers fare from around the world, boasting delicacies such as king crab legs, fresh shrimp cocktail, crab stuffed sole, salmon, oysters and scallops. Make your own tacos and build your own hamburgers with made-to-order patties cooked to perfection. In the Asian section, items include fried rice, egg rolls and sushi. The Middle Eastern section boasts kabobs, hummus and lamb.

**Strip House** is the only steakhouse awarded four stars in Forbes Magazine's All-Star Eateries 2008 and again in All-Star Eateries 2009; it's been touted a “celebrity hot spot” by People.com and was named one of the top ten new restaurants in Las Vegas by Zagat's Best of Las Vegas.

The innovative menu is designed to excite all the senses with prime cuts of beef charred to perfection, signature side dishes, an extensive wine list and the famed 24-layer chocolate cake.

**Yolo's Mexican Grill** is vibrantly painted and includes a fun-loving crowd and mouth-watering traditional Mexican favourites that give patrons the feeling of being at a fiesta. You can keep the party going with Yolo's impressive selection of 60 tequilas and a fresh fruit margarita bar.

### Casino and Bars:

Prepare to get lost as the casino at Planet Hollywood Resort has nearly three acres of gaming including thousands of the latest slot machines and 80 table games. The PHamous Pleasure Pit features blackjack and roulette, dealt by beautiful women dressed in lingerie and irresistible Pleasure Pit go-go dancers. The happening Poker Room and the Playing Field Race & Sports Book also bring a new level of gambling excitement.

**The EXTRA Lounge** at Planet Hollywood is the perfect Las Vegas lounge to grab a drink and people watch. The lounge features live music Wednesday through Saturday from 9 pm to 1 am.

**Heart Bar** is a Las Vegas nightlife landmark located in the centre of Planet Hollywood's sensational 3-acre Las Vegas casino floor. The vibe is electric, with people from both sides of the velvet rope gathering for their favourite libations in a decadent setting of dark woods and mirrored glass.

**PH Shiver Bar** at Planet Hollywood is conveniently located on the front plaza by the North Casino Entrance near Gordon Ramsay BurGR. The bar offers many options to quench your thirst, with an extensive cocktail and draft beer list.

**The Playing Field Lounge** hot spot features sleek décor with 33 plasma screens, two jumbo screens and a VIP area. And of course, no Las Vegas lounge would be complete without an expansive full bar specialising in yards of draft beer.



### Entertainment:

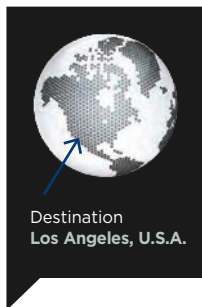
The AXIS is the newly renovated 7,000-seat theatre at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, which opened on Dec. 27, 2013 with the venue's first artist-in-residence, Britney Spears and her show, 'Britney: Piece of Me'. Partnered with the world's leading promoter of live entertainment, Live Nation Entertainment, The AXIS marks Live Nation's first significant alliance with a venue of this size in Las Vegas. Through its exclusive, long-term partnership, Live Nation is dedicated to securing an impressive set of resident headliners and top touring acts to the venue and in 2017 book in to see sensational shows from Lionel Richie and Jennifer Lopez to The Backstreet Boys. With a nod to the growing importance of nightlife to the Las Vegas visitor experience, The AXIS also features innovative

dance floor and VIP table seating concept that allows guests a one-of-a-kind concert experience that is made even more exceptional by the nightlife-oriented service.

### Shopping:

Miracle Mile Shops is a 1.2 mile retail/entertainment complex at the heart of Las Vegas Boulevard. Miracle Mile Shops boasts streamlined and modernised storefronts, people movers, a backlit sidewalk water feature, state-of-the-art LED video screens, crystal chandeliers, a multi-million dollar fountain show and contemporary, colour-coded kiosks. The centre benefits from its excellent street access and helps serve the 38 million tourists who visit Las Vegas each year. Miracle Mile Shops features 15 restaurants, live entertainment and 170 specialty stores. ■■





# Rock & Roll in L.A.

By Tim Roxborough

Tim Roxborough has been obsessed with popular music since childhood, so it made sense on his recent trip to Los Angeles to seek out a couple of the city's greatest, most mythic rock & roll hotels.

## Rock & Roll Hotel #1: The Redbury

I'm sure there were countless other things in my 79m2 suite more expensive! Of course there were, but straight away it got my attention. A record player! In my hotel room! Complete with a stack of classic albums all on vinyl, I knew the Redbury was going to be my kind of hotel.

With the needle hitting the grooves on Rod Stewart's early masterpiece *Every Picture Tells A Story*, my girlfriend and I set about letting what we'd just walked into sink in. Beyond the records we had a spacious living room decked out in retro furniture of a mid-20th century vibe, a full kitchen with a long bench that doubled as a bar-stooled table, a washing machine and dryer, a balcony, a suitably swanky bathroom and four-poster bed.



Above: The Redbury

After purposely admiring the look of the suite (oversized clocks, dozens of small, framed artworks) from each piece of furniture, it was the four-poster bed that called the loudest. That time-travelling flight from New Zealand that has you arriving in L.A. at 6am the same day you left but several hours earlier is a killer. Even with Hollywood at our door and the California sun overhead, we succumbed to the bed.

Maybe it was the jetlag, maybe it was the 300-thread count Italian linen, but there aren't too many times in my life when I've woken

up judging my sleep to have been "spectacular!" But spectacular it was. Showered and with a foggy mind clearing, it was time to explore the hotel and the neighbourhood.

Located at the corner of Hollywood Boulevard and Vine Street and right across the road from the iconic Capitol Records Tower, the 57-suited Redbury is lauded for having revitalised this part of Hollywood since opening in 2010. Designed by celebrity photographer Matthew Rolston and famed L.A. businessman/hotelier Sam Nazarian, there's a kind of bohemian

flamboyance that runs throughout.

The shadowy hallways and rich, clay reds of the walls give way to floor-to-ceiling images from Hollywood's golden era. Chesterfield couches sit outside the elevators and whether dining or having a drink, the choice between the outdoor patio or the indoor restaurant (Cleo) will likely have you in the company of a star or two.

Not that you'd necessarily know it as the lighting in the public spaces at the Redbury is such that you might not realise it's Justin Timberlake in the adjacent booth. Or in my case,



Above: The Redbury



Above: The Sunset Marquis



I took a photo from our perch at the bar at Cleo and only realised afterwards that the chap in the foreground was James Valentine, lead guitarist of Maroon 5.

With its retro chic stylings, in vogue Hollywood location and a setup as suitable for long term stays (for those deep of wallet) as much as short ones, the Redbury has emerged as a magnet for a new generation of A-listers. Though there's still another hotel across town that refuses to give up its crown.

## Rock & Roll Hotel #2: The Sunset Marquis

There's not a city on earth that has as many legendary showbiz hotels as L.A. Properties like the Chateau Marmont, the Beverly Wilshire, the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Sunset Tower have long been haunts favoured by stars of the

silver screen. It's not that musicians haven't also hunkered down in those hotels – they have and still do. It's just that until the Redbury announced itself on the scene, there was really only one name in rock & roll hotels in the City of Angels. And even after more than 50 years, that still feels the case if you're ever fortunate enough to stay there.

The Sunset Marquis...I couldn't believe we were really here. Having caught a short cab from Hollywood to the heart of the Sunset Strip, I don't think I'll ever forget the squeal of my girlfriend when the door was opened to our suite. I'd told her to expect something pretty special and luckily for me, she wasn't let down. After walking through a tropically lush, gloriously narrow and canopied garden to our Mediterranean-style villa, a heavy wooden door was pushed aside to a sight forever tattooed in my mind.


We'd arrived in our living room, a space comfortably bigger than most Auckland apartments. An L-shaped couch spanned half of the room, a full dining room table in the corner. When I say full, I also mean in terms of what was on it. A fruit pyramid stacked high, a platter of cheese and crackers, a plate of gold-flecked, chocolate-coated strawberries and a bottle of Pinot Noir several pay grades above our usual.

From the living room it was a straight line to the bedroom, though our eyes were distracted from the king-size bed by the sight of the bathroom. A circular bathtub lay in the centre of the room, with his and hers vanities on opposing sides. At the back was a wide-berth shower with several options for angle of spray. This suite was going to take some leaving.

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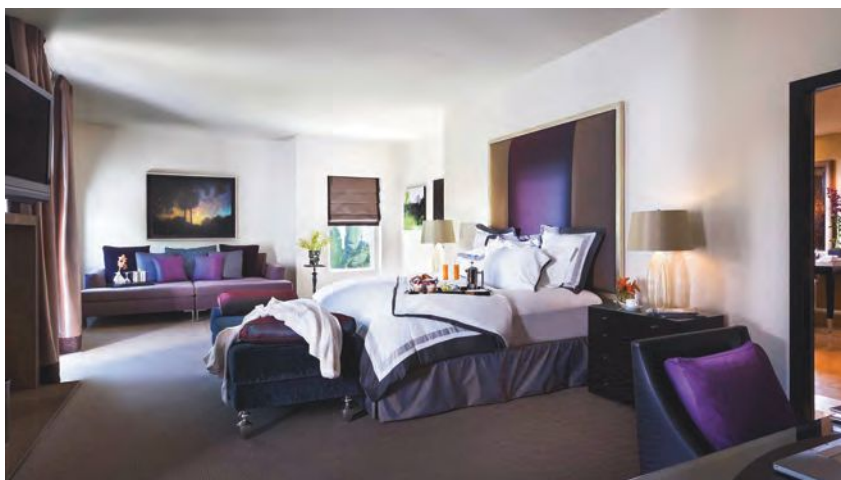
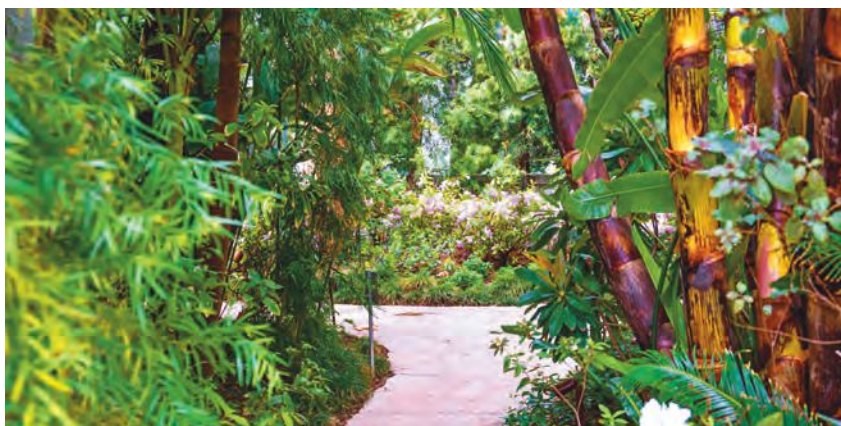
Putting on music and deciding the wine had been left unopened too long, we poured ourselves a glass and did a repeat of our awestruck entrance at the Redbury. Only this time we had years of rock & roll history to pore over, a good portion of it detailed in the book *If These Walls Could Rock*. Released as a 50th anniversary memento of the greatest rock & roll hotel in the world, this is the coffee table book to beat all coffee table books. With copies in every suite, you're able to educate yourself on just who may have slept in your bed before you.\*

Some of those names: Bruce Springsteen, Rod Stewart, Bob Dylan, U2, The Bee Gees, Fleetwood Mac, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sting, Elton John and indeed, virtually every other major name in popular music history. The Sunset Marquis has hosted them all, a conclusion that raises an obvious question...Why?

Once upon a time the reasons may have had more to do with blind-eye turning than luxury. If rock stars needed a place to kick back where no amount of questionable relaxation techniques would see them kicked out or the cops called, then in the 60s and 70s, the Sunset Marquis was a no-brainer.

Somewhere along the line the reputation began to shift. The Sunset Marquis was still the place for artists, creators and thinkers to congregate and it was still a place for relative anonymity, but it also became decidedly more opulent and zen. Through all of this the Sunset Marquis has quite magically managed to straddle the line between being the coolest escape for the coolest people while still being unpretentious.

The way we were treated by the staff was remarkable and the warmth and personalised sincerity of it recalled the best small boutique hotels I've reviewed. From the "Garden Of Allah" inspired gardens to the 60s chic of the swimming pools, from the basement recording studio that still attracts the biggest names to the hip discretion of Bar 1200, the Sunset Marquis is no ordinary hotel. And given it's been the favourite address for all my music heroes for so many decades, it might just be mine now too. 🍷



Above: The Sunset Marquis

### facts:

Tim Roxborough was a guest of the Sunset Marquis ([www.sunsetmarquis.com](http://www.sunsetmarquis.com)) and of The Redbury ([www.theredbury.com/hollywood](http://www.theredbury.com/hollywood)). Please visit [www.discoverlosangeles.com](http://www.discoverlosangeles.com) to help plan your Los Angeles holiday.

\*The Sunset Marquis also has a gallery at its entrance called The Morrison Hotel Gallery. If you love rock & roll photography this is a must-visit, even if you're not staying at the hotel. Many of the images were taken at the Sunset Marquis.

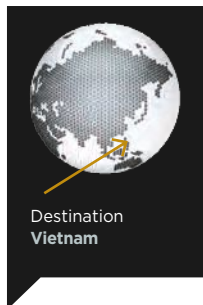
# Asia

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# Gastronomic hedonism without punishment

Words and images by Liz Light





Pho, the essential breakfast.



Fresh seafood to go.

Every day starts with coffee. That's life. I'm open to new coffee cultural experiences and, in Vietnam, I become enamoured with café sua.

Vietnam grows and exports superb coffee but doesn't have a dairy industry so a flat white is a challenge. But, getting around the milk problem, traditional café sua includes a centimetre of sweetened condensed milk in the bottom of a glass, then a stainless steel filter, plugged with finely ground coffee, sits on top of the glass. Boiling water is poured into the filter and thick black coffee drips through making pretty patterns in the pale milk. Nam' coffee is good to watch.

We sit with our guide, Khoi, and watch the dripping process. This country does not have coffee-to-go. Coffee is about sitting and socialising. We talk about food. Khoi tells us that, in Vietnam, when people meet they don't say, "How are you?" They say, "Have you eaten, yet?"

While we chat I keep an eye on activity in the street. A man cycles by with his bicycle festooned with bags of vegetables. A woman walks past with a pop-up soup kitchen stacked into two flat baskets carried, like balance scales, by a bamboo pole over her shoulder...

and she is wearing an iconic conical hat. Another woman has a bigger portable kitchen on a purpose-built trolley with fat wheels.

The coffee is ready. It's strong, sweet, intense and energising.

We find breakfast, pho, the quintessential bowl of broth and rice noodles. It can be found in cafes, food halls and in holes-in-the-wall occupied by Mama, her trolley and little red stools. I have pho with clams, though chicken or pork and are more common. It's soupy, steamy and the rice noodles are slurpy. Besides clams dominant tastes are lemongrass, garlic and fish sauce. There's also coriander garnish and a huff of chilli.

After visiting a few must-see Ho Chi Minh sites - Notre Dame Cathedral and Saigon Central Post Office - we walk to the market.

Vietnamese fruit is the perfect combo of liquid refreshment ambrosial tropical tastes. At Ben Thanh Market we find pomelo, a pink, sweet version of grapefruit. Jackfruit is as big as a rugby ball with barnacle-like skin, and has sweet, delicious, pungent, yellow segments. Dragon fruit, with scarlet scales, is refreshing in a watery way and rambutan has skin with soft spikes; it looks and tastes like a lychee.

Longan is a round fruit which, when opened, looks like an eyeball and has a grapey taste.

The dried fruit section is a treat; big yellow chewy slices of mango, crunchy dried banana, nuggets of sweet and spicy ginger, pinwheels of pineapple and thin, almost transparent, slithers of bright green Kiwi called Mu'u Kiwi. That's one out of left field.

In the sauces and pickles section there are about a hundred different brands of fermented fish sauce. Apparently, a fish sauce gourmet knows the difference between one variety and another. More to my taste is the pickled garlic and onions, and jars of pickled radish and carrots which are side dishes to many meals.

We have walked-up an appetite and Khoi knows just the place for



## facts:

**Getting there:** Cathay Pacific flies from New Zealand to Ho Chi Minh via Hong Kong every day. [www.cathaypacific.co.nz](http://www.cathaypacific.co.nz)

Overnight at Hong Kong airport. Regal Hotel is superb and only 100 metres from the terminal building. [www.regalhotel.com](http://www.regalhotel.com)

World Journeys offers tailor-made itineraries throughout Vietnam and Indochina ([www.worldjourneys.co.nz](http://www.worldjourneys.co.nz)). The Ho Chi Minh gastronomic experience would be impossible to organise without a guide and World Journeys' guides are excellent.

**When:** Vietnam is an all season's destination. The temperature in Ho Chi Minh is moderate (22 to 30°C)



Fruit platter.

lunch. A Mekong elephant-ear fish looks creepy, to us, because it's propped-up vertically, on a stand, with head, fins and tail intact, as if it's ready to swim away.

But it's been deep fried to a scale-curling crispness, on the outside, and the waitress deftly opens it and pulls away tender white flesh. She rolls this up in rice paper with fresh pineapple, noodles and herbs. We dip the roll into spicy peanut sauce. The end result is a complex, fresh, taste sensation.

This is followed by deep fried banana flowers, steamed shrimp with spicy coconut sauce and rice, of course. Khoi says one must always complete lunch with rice because it's stabilising. We feel so stabilised we need a nap. We farewell Khoi and take a cab back to our divinely comfortable Hotel Caravelle.

Darkness arrives quickly and at seven o'clock Ho Chi Minh is bright lights and motorbikes. Khoi takes us on a street food tour.

The first stop is at a Banh Mi shop. The humble French baguette has evolved into a uniquely Vietnamese sandwich. Crusty short baguettes are rolling out of massive ovens at the back of the shop and, in front, a cluster of customers specify the contents they want. The guts of it is grilled pork or chicken, sausage, pate or sardines but the tastes that sing are the pickled carrots, coriander, white radish, slabs of cool cucumber and hot surprises of thinly sliced birds' eye chilli.

The next snack is at a pavement pop-up outside the Saigon Ford showroom. The specialty, here, is Banh Trang Nuong, a version of pizza. The rice flour base is cooked



Sweet sticky rice treats wrapped in banana leaf.

on hot steel slabs then topped with a choice of egg, squid or prawns with a sprinkle of green chilli, salt and a squeeze of lime juice. We sit at low tables on small plastic stools and crispy-based treats keep coming.

The main meal, Cha Ca Thang Long, is earthy, salty, savory and fresh. It's both soft and crunchy. Catfish fillets have been marinated in turmeric, ginger, garlic and fish sauce. The fish absorbs the flavour of the marinade then is seared until crispy. Onions, scallions, dill and Vietnamese mint have been quickly sautéed. These are served together with a bowl of garlic rice. The garlic is in big seared slices. It's a typically Vietnamese combination of deliciously contrary tastes.

Every day in Vietnam is a gastronomic delight and at the end of a week of indulgence I stand on the scales expecting the worst but there is no weight gain. Besides being delicious the food is light, healthy and mostly fat free. Yay, hedonism without the punishment. 🍽️



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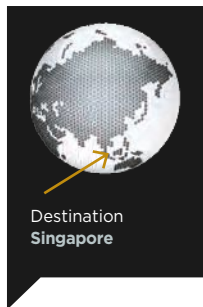
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JOURNEYS



# Luxury in the Lion City (Part 1)

By Gary Dickson

Singapore...one of my favourite places on the planet. There is always something to do, something new to see, or something old and familiar to re-visit.



Kwee Zeen, Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa

It used to be the view of many that Singapore was a 'stopover' on their way to or from Europe. Not any more! Singapore is as vibrant a destination in its own right as any you could wish to visit. Spending a week here is easy – I had four days in The Lion City recently and was introduced to some special memories and experiences.

In this issue I look at the two luxury properties I stayed at during my stay. Over the next couple of issues I'll suggest great places for visitors to eat (and drink), as well as some exciting new attractions that are must-dos.



Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa

**A Brief History:** For the uninitiated... Stamford Raffles (he which the famous Raffles Hotel is named after) founded colonial Singapore in 1819 as a trading post for The East India Company. The islands were then ceded to Britain and became part of the Straits Settlements in 1826. Singapore was occupied by the Japanese, during World War II, from 1942 thru to 1945 and gained independence from Britain in 1963 before becoming its own sovereign state in 1965. Today the population is made up of Chinese (74%), Malay (14%), Indian (9%) and Others (3%).

## 1 Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa:

French elegance amidst a haven of tranquility – sums up this resort to a tee. Located on Singapore's playground (Sentosa Island) and atop a cliff rising above Tanjong Beach, is a haven of tranquility and relaxation blessed with stunning views of sunsets over the horizon. The property is encased in tropical surroundings with panoramic views of the South China Sea.

The 215 exquisite rooms, suites and villas appeal to corporates, international conference holders and holidaymakers alike, offering the ultimate experience in luxury, comfort and service.

Surrounded by manicured lawns, spacious outdoor areas with panoramic sea views, natural daylight illuminated indoor spaces and served by a private driveway, Universal Studios Singapore, Tanjong Beach and Sentosa Golf Club are within close proximity to the resort.

A quick taxi ride (around SGD\$10-\$15 – depending on the time of day) will also find you in Chinatown lapping up the nation's culture.

So Spa: ancient traditions from around the world meet in this relaxing environment and with the latest in French cosmetology create So SPA... an exhilarating and rejuvenating experience. The multi award winning So SPA is the largest So SPA in the world with 14 indoor treatment rooms and 6 outdoor spa pavilions. Indulge in the outdoor Spa Garden where a swimming pool, oat pool with cascading waterfall, meditative labyrinth and mud pool beckon.



Junior Suite, Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa



LeBar, Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa

## Restaurants & Bars:

**Kwee Zeen:** presents an interactive dining experience, whisking you on a culinary journey around the world with a sumptuous assortment of Pan-Asian specialties and classic French fare. Chocolaterie, located within Kwee Zeen, is a haven for chocolate, éclair, cake and macaron lovers. It also serves the best buffet breakfast I have had anywhere.

iLido at the Cliff: presents the finest Italian cuisine and international wines to savour while relishing the breath-taking views of the South China Sea and lush tropical greenery.

**The Garden:** located in a charming conservation building next to So SPA, The Garden offers wholesome contemporary cuisine. Enjoy the freshest ingredients

delicately prepared to retain the ingredients' natural goodness and flavours. The food is to die for.

**LeBar:** a perfect place where you can enjoy afternoon tea 'à la Française', which comprises gourmet sandwiches, scones and French pastries served with fragrant tea or coffee. In the evening, the lounge is transformed into a place to relax and catch up with friends over drinks.

The Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa is located 26kms from Changi International Airport and can be easily accessed by taxi or MRT train. Complimentary shuttle bus services are available for transfers from the hotel to VivoCity (where Sentosa is connected to the 'mainland'), and to Paragon Shopping Centre located in the heart of Orchard Road.

Sentosa is Singapore's Playground. In amongst the luxury of your stay at Sofitel Sentosa the island also offers a host of leisure and lifestyle experiences that promise to excite, thrill and serve as memory-makers for visitors.

#### **Sofitel Singapore Sentosa**

##### **Resort & Spa**

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**P: + 65 6708 8310**

**[www.sofitel-singapore-sentosa.com](http://www.sofitel-singapore-sentosa.com)**

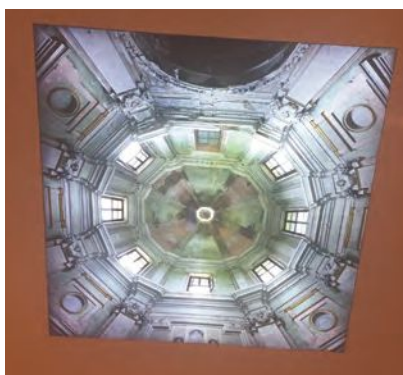
## **2 Sofitel So Singapore:**

A luxury designer boutique hotel! A stay at this luxury 5-star hotel is an experience all in itself. Nowhere else in Singapore will you find a clash of high society, French heritage and flair, local style and traditions all melded in to one location. Expect the unexpected at this crossroad between Paris and Southeast Asia.

The elegant neoclassical building that is SO Sofitel Singapore today nestles among the skyscrapers of downtown Singapore.

Built in 1927, this colonial gem was designed by the city's first and foremost architecture firm, Swan and Maclaren, for the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company. In 2013, history took a new turn for this listed building, when it became the So Sofitel, which, despite its many transformations and past lives, has lost none of the magnificent period features that make this hotel SO special.

Unfortunately my stay at So Sofitel Singapore, as often happens, consisted of arriving late from the



airport and departing the next morning, BUT I did manage to squeeze in a refreshing couple of nightcaps in their rooftop bar before settling in to my room.

The 'famous' Singapore evening thunderstorm never fails to impress me (anyone who has taken off at night from Changi Airport will attest to that) and the rooftop location of the bar at So Sofitel Singapore was the ideal location to admire it.

The rooms, and indeed the entire hotel, are what I would class as 'funky'. In the traditional So Sofitel style eclectic collections of art abound. My Junior Suite was exquisite and one I wish I had more time to enjoy, but it was the little things that caught my eye. Separate His and Hers drawers for bathroom extras, a very cool coffee machine/mini-bar and the size and comfort of my bed all get 10 out of 10.

#### **Sofitel So Singapore**

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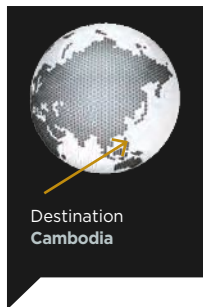
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# All Along the Mekong

Words & images by Roderick Eime





Expedition cruiser, Roderick Eime, finds Southeast Asia's busiest waterway still has room for adventure and a little bit of luxury.

Close your eyes and say "Mekong" softly under your breath. Now, before someone thinks you've had too much tropical sun, tell me what you see. If you said a wide bustling river bordered by lush undergrowth, with busy locals pushing their sampans under a balmy Southeast Asian sun, then you're on the money.

The Mekong is the dominant river of Southeast Asia, running like a great life-giving artery down the curved spine of what was once French Indochina. The rich and fertile lands bordering the river have been the objective of warring dynasties for centuries and it's only been the last couple of decades that the entire region has experienced relative peace.

With Communist, one-party Vietnam settling into a productive market economy and Cambodia recovering from the catastrophic upheaval of the 1970s, the region is attracting a bounty of tourists to this once mysterious part of the world, and by all accounts, the locals are pleased to see us.

In the last decade the fleet of cruise vessels plying this major waterway has expanded exponentially in line with tourism numbers. And those vessels have been quickly badged and branded by the major players from the world's river cruising industry.

The aquatic journey begins, not in Ho Chi Minh City, but in the delta port of My Tho, a short coach ride from our downtown hotel. Lined up along the wharf are the Pandaw and Margeurite, vessels that share the premium category with others like those from APT and Heritage Line.



Most itineraries are similar and our first stop is Cai Be, a traditional trading port where we cruise in our local sampan among the many vendors bobbing up and down in the floating market. Fish, vegetables, rice and household items adorn the merchant boats, each advertising their trade with an item stuck to a pole and thrust in the air. On this early part of the trip, aided by excellent guides, we discover the many traditional industries like rice paper making, weaving, fish farming and even brick making that have been carried on here for centuries.

We cross the border at Chau Doc, a thriving market town with tiny alleyways lined with everything from meat and fish chopped on the spot to t-shirts and plastic pots. The town tour is enhanced with a rickshaw ride and there's time to kill as our paperwork is laboured over by border officials.

Into Cambodia the pace of life changes immediately. The Khmer people do not share the frenetic urgency of their Cochin Chinese neighbours, and we are greeted serenely by the locals all along the river. The ubiquitous red scarfs of the villagers only serve to remind me of the infamous Khmer Rouge, the ranks of whom were filled by the poor rural folk from villages such as Angkor Ban, a hamlet that retains much of its traditional lifestyle including the wooden stilt houses, long since destroyed in the rest of the country.



We arrive at Phnom Penh early and as this is my fourth trip to the city, instead of revisiting the mandatory sights of the museums and Killing Fields, I catch up with my movie star pal, Kem (Srah) Sereyvuth. I met Srah while researching a story on a previous trip and like so many of the older locals he has harrowing tales of survival and loss under the Khmer Rouge. Srah was picked from a throng of clamouring hopefuls to play the part of a cyclo-rider in Matt Dillon's gritty 2002 thriller, *City of Ghosts*, starring himself, James Caan, Gerard Depardieu and filmed amid the hurly burly and dust of Phnom Penh's crumbling backstreets. Today

spider and cockroaches. Not a highlight for me, you might prefer high water season, which is from August to mid-December.

Although not necessarily a formal part of your cruise itinerary, it stands to reason that you will linger in the now sprawling township of Siem Reap to take in the UNESCO World Heritage icon, Angkor Wat. Give yourself plenty of time, at least a couple of days, and savour the splendour of this magnificent monument.

In summary, a cruise along the Mekong is a vital addition to the brag bag of any serious river cruiser. The ships in this segment are all superb and well supported by specialist agents and retailers. ■■



#### facts:

Air New Zealand fly three times a week between Auckland and Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN) on a seasonal basis, operating from July to October on their 787-9 Dreamliner. [www.airnz.co.nz](http://www.airnz.co.nz)

# Pacific Islands

Hawai'i 60

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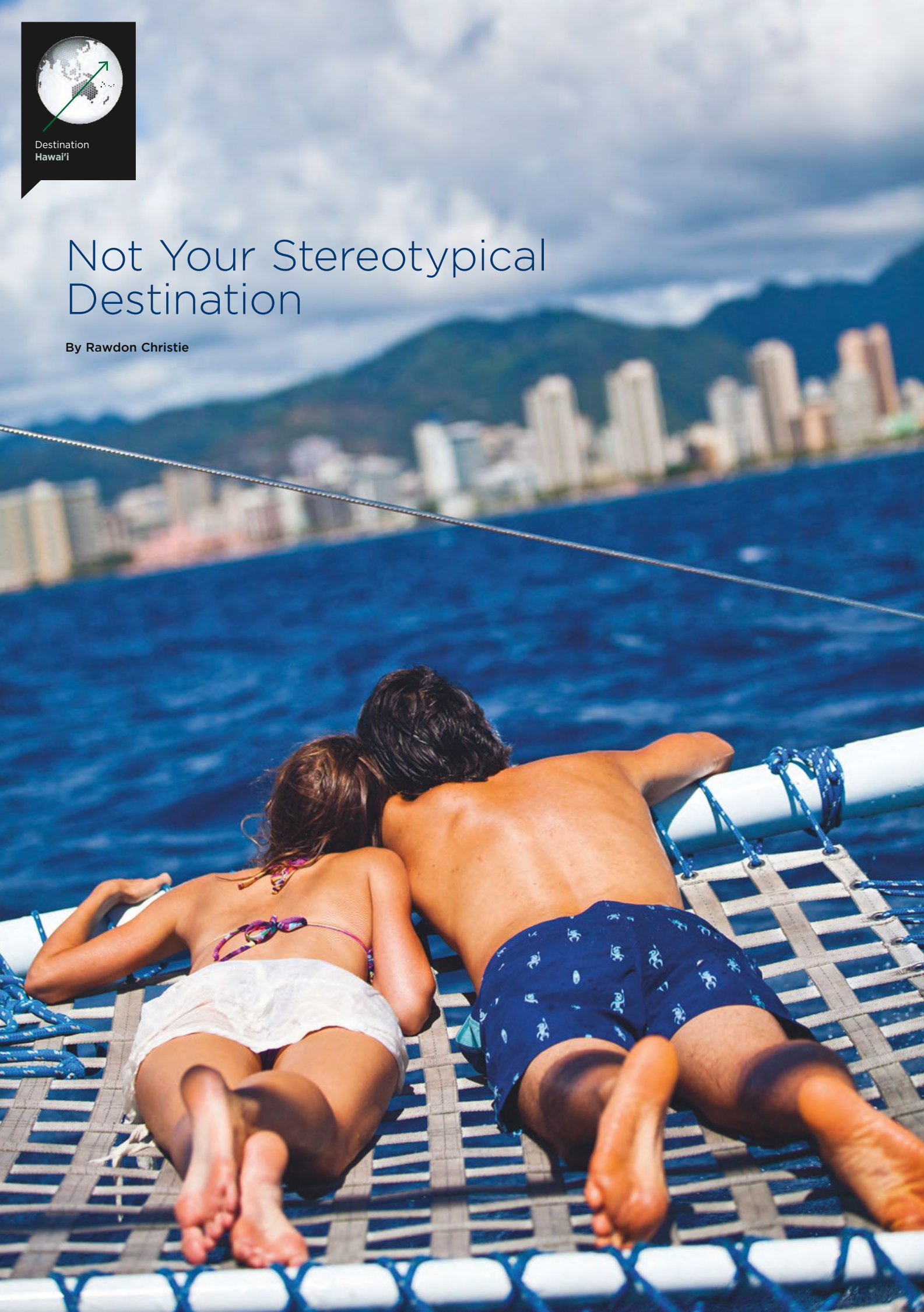




Destination  
Hawai'i

# Not Your Stereotypical Destination

By Rawdon Christie





According to the Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of the word 'cliché' is something that is "overused and betrays a lack of original thought" and, given the number of people who told me to head to Hawai'i when I told them I needed to 'get away from it all' (cliché?), that is what I thought as I booked my flights to Oahu. Then again, the reason for the trip also seemed clichéd.

I'd recently finished an all-consuming career of seventeen years and my wife and I had never taken a proper holiday without the kids since they first started arriving fourteen years ago. "Second Honeymoon?" friends would ask, and I guess, in a clichéd sort of way, it was.

But there's a reason why something becomes a cliché. It's because, on the whole, it's EARNED its popularity, and as soon as we left Honolulu airport, we could see why Hawai'i has become such a popular destination for the kiwi holiday-maker.

For starters, it's easy. Direct flights from New Zealand taking less than ten hours and the timezone is



almost exactly 24 hours behind, so no jet lag.

It's also a place of diversity. Culturally, it is home to descendants of European explorers, of Polynesian adventurers, of American missionaries and Asian immigrants. Geographically, it boasts some of the world's most sparkling beaches, forboding volcanoes and crystal-clear reefs.

We'd been advised that to make the most of this diversity, a few days

on the famous Waikiki Beach should be balanced with a trip to an outer island...so that is what we did.

First stop Waikiki, Honolulu's most famous attraction. Waikiki was a big surprise to me. I was expecting a 'Gold Coast' with Americans instead of Australians, but this was far from a Gold Coast. There were, of course, the high-rise hotels and condos lining a long stretch of soft, sandy beach, but that is where the similarities stopped.



I found Waikiki to be classy. Sophisticated. Smart. The restaurants, the shops, the cars, the people, even the wrought-iron street signs were stylish and tasteful. Our hotel (The Moana Surfrider) was an elegant, turn-of-the-century hotel which boasted old-world tradition with modern luxury. One day, an English afternoon tea on the terrace, the next an “artisanal elixir” (or handcrafted cocktail) served at the Vintage 1901 Bar under the multifarious trunks of the ancient banyan tree in the hotel courtyard.

Step out of the hotel and Waikiki is busy, bustling. The hotel pools aren't extensive (in part due to limited space) and people seem to spend less time 'lazing' and more time shopping, walking, surfing.

Everyone who goes there surely has to try and surf, and the boards for hire are so big and stable that even the least-confident of surfers are in with a reasonable chance of catching a wave on one of the world's most famous beaches.

If it's culture you're after, there are an abundance of traditional 'Luau' serving up Hawaiian food,



entertainment and Polynesian dance and music. A front row seat at the high-energy Moana Nui show in the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani will bring you within roasting distance of the “World's Finest Samoan Fire Knife Dancer”.

If it's good food you're after, Waikiki offers a culinary adventure

to rival anywhere in the world. From steakhouses to seafood restaurants, from beachside burgers to an abundance of Japanese eateries. For the shoppers, all you need to know is Ala Moana Centre - the seventh largest shopping mall in the United States and the largest open-air shopping centre in the world. Enough said.

There is a buzz about Waikiki that excites, thrills yet relaxes, all at the same time. But the true magic of Hawai'i? That's what Maui's for.

There are so many reasons why the island of Maui consistently tops travel magazine reader polls as one of the world's most beautifully romantic islands.

There are of course the 5-star resorts, clustered alongside world-class beaches, such as the 5km-long Kaanapali Beach, once voted America's Best Beach.

That's where we found the Hyatt Regency, offering everything you'd expect of the Hyatt Regency brand - a large scale premium hotel, several top-class restaurants, pools and an enviable beachside location. But, being Hawai'i, 'corporate' is cleverly interwoven with 'character' - in this case, parrots in the gardens, flamingos, swans and storks in the hotel lake, and penguins in the hotel lobby (certainly no cliché there).

But the true character of Maui is found in small coastal settlements, such as the village of Paia, on the North coast - a gentle, unassuming beachside hub that boasts hippy-influenced craft shops, Willie Nelson's favourite diner 'Charley's' and (just down the road) Ho'okipa, one of the most famous wind surfing beaches in the world where we watched turtles dip and dive in the wild surf.

...or the historic town of Lahaina, on the South Coast - a 19th century whaling village that boasts art



galleries, quaint shops and an abundance of eateries along a lively waterside Front Street...or swimming alongside the giant turtles, just metres off the hotel beach.

And Maui's crowning glory? Possibly the biggest cliché of them all...the sunrise, observed from the crest of a volcano.

In our case, the volcano was Haleakala, Hawaiian for 'House of the Sun', and world-famous for its sunrises. As I stood with my arms wrapped around my shivering wife (at that altitude, the temperature is distinctly un-Hawaiian), wishing we'd stolen our hotel blankets like the hundreds standing alongside us, at four in the morning, I realised I was feeling complete contentment for the first time in a long (very long) time.

There's a reason a decent sunrise on a clear dawn is so often photographed, timelapsed, instagrammed, facebooked - it has to be one of nature's most majestic sights. And now I was seeing the most magnificent example, on a perfect dawn, with my best friend and partner of 22 years...in Hawai'i. Talk about clichés! 🇺🇸

[www.hawaiiitourism.co.nz](http://www.hawaiiitourism.co.nz)





Destination  
Vanuatu

# Where Time Stands Still

By Gayle Dickson

I had the bay to myself. There wasn't another person or boat to be seen. My only company were a few sea birds, a solitary turtle, a curious dugong and copious colourful fish. I was in heaven in this slice of paradise.





After a lengthy snorkel, I made my way back to the beach and attempted my very best Ursula Andress impersonation, probably failing miserably and eternally grateful I was in fact alone.

I walked a few steps across the rocky beach to the steps that led to my private viewing deck, washed off the salt water under the shower, and then climbed a few more stairs to my villa. The towel hung up, I grabbed a cold beer from the fridge, which had been stocked with my preferences, and headed for the oversized swing bed with views over the infinity pool towards the bay.

Such is the pace of life at The Havannah in Vanuatu. Time stands still. There is no pressure to do anything or be anywhere. The silence is broken only by the twitter of birds, the lapping shoreline and, now and then, the gentle sounds of a staff member humming or singing happily as they go about their chores.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner at The Point restaurant are relaxed affairs...in terms of atmosphere, not the food, which was exceptional by any standards. The steaks are tender and succulent, the salads crisp and crunchy, the desserts decadently sweet. If the lobster tail risotto or The Havannah raw fish salad are on the menu, don't miss them!

In a world-class resort such as this, I bet you're wondering how it is possible to enjoy so much peace and solitude. The answer is simple. No kids under sixteen and only 17 villas. A recipe for true relaxation, exceptional service and a holiday to remember.

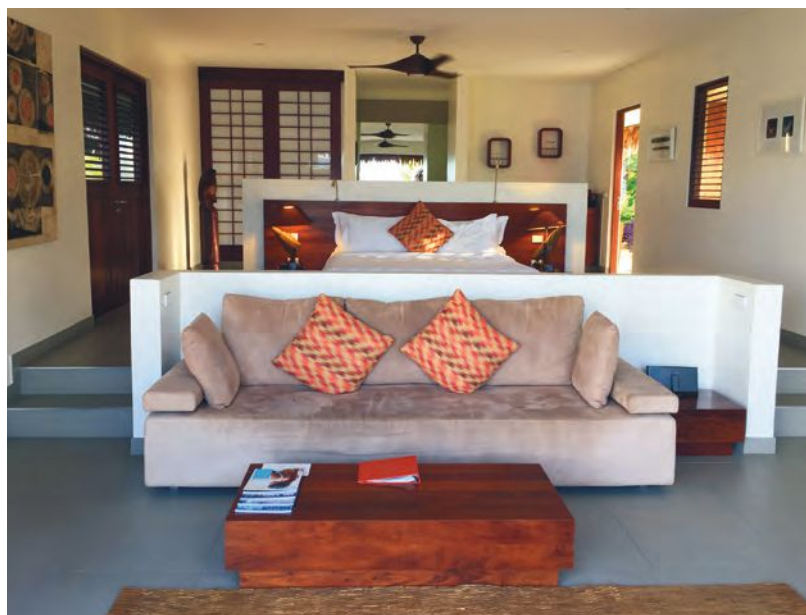
That said, there is plenty to occupy your hours if you're so inclined... tennis, pétanque, snorkelling, diving, kayaking, tours and excursions or picnics on nearby islands to name a few. You can scuba or fly board with local operators, take a sunset cruise around the bay or simply chill even more in the Arôm'Essence Day Spa where they offer massages and facials.

Owners, Greg and Liz Pechan, have created the perfect hideaway for luxurious getaways and romantic interludes, and Frederick and Victoria Maclean manage the resort to perfection. I loved that each staff member not only greeted you with a smile, as is customary in most island resorts, but here they extend a hand and introduce themselves by their first name. They remember your drink presences and nothing (and I mean nothing) is too much trouble.

While enjoying the Robinson Crusoe effect of the peace and tranquility, guests certainly don't go without any of life's conveniences. My Deluxe Villa boasted a kitchenette with bar fridge and espresso machine along the back wall, and a workstation opposite. Robes are tucked into the large wardrobes for your convenience. The bathing area is spacious and well appointed with walk-in shower, double vanity and separate loo, lit with both atmospheric and task lighting. The deep bath is outside under thatch, and beautifully lit for long leisurely evening soaks. The day bed, also under thatch, gently sways in the breeze. The pool itself has two in-water loungers and two further comfy chairs sit on the front deck. To the far side is a dining area under thatch with a large barbecue where the chef will prepare your meal on demand. All outdoor thatched areas are lit and have ceiling fans. Back indoors, the sleeping area is raised to offer a view of the bay over the lounge through stacking doors that open the full width of the wall. There is air conditioning, television and a Bose iPhone dock.

There truly is nothing that has been left off the list here. Check in, head to your villa, hang up the do not disturb sign that reads "Busy Sun Baking" and you need never see anyone until checkout apart from ordering room service! 🍹

[www.thehavannah.com](http://www.thehavannah.com)



# Vanuatu

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[airvanuatu.com](http://airvanuatu.com)  
[www.vanuatu.travel](http://www.vanuatu.travel)

  
**Air Vanuatu**



Destination  
Tahiti

## Tikehau... The Pink Sand Island

Located 300km from Tahiti and just 12km from Rangiroa, Tikehau and its lagoon of 26km<sup>2</sup>, look very similar to a natural outdoor swimming pool! Within its waters, where fish are plentiful, the most amazing species will literally blow away snorkellers.

In the air, admire the bird colonies where many species hold magical names such as red-footed boobies, greater crested terns, blue noddies, or lesser frigatebird.

In Tūherahera, the only village around the atoll, life is peaceful and follows the rhythms of fishing, copra and religious services. It is a fabulous opportunity to indulge oneself in the typical easy-going atmosphere of a Tuamotu atoll.



### Three good reasons to stay on Tikehau:

#### 1 A lagoon that holds its promises:

This oval shaped lagoon formed by a series of motu featuring white and pink sand beaches, is a genuinely natural pool, opening to a small pass called Tuheiva. Keen divers will be enthralled by the amazing marine life where eagle rays, schools of barracuda and tuna, grey reef sharks, marine turtles and dolphin like to play. For those in search of a relaxing time, the untouched sandy beaches lying by the pure and warm emerald lagoon will definitely fill their expectations.

#### 2 - Natural and beautiful curiosities:

Explore Tūherahera village and the superb desert atoll's beaches. See the impressive coral remnants lying on the beach on the South coast, forming a natural wall. You will travel in time discovering the legend of Hina's bell closely linked to this place. On the motu, pink sand beaches, a nature's wonder, are awaiting you.

#### 3 A particularly fishy atoll

Millions of fish live in this untouched transparent world. The volume of fish is so large that the research crew of Captain Cousteau had named it 'the most fish abundant Tuamotu atoll'. ■

[www.tahiti-tourisme.co.nz](http://www.tahiti-tourisme.co.nz)

## Rangiroa... The Endless Sky

Rangiroa offers its visitors various accommodation options to suit expectation and budget. Several categories of hotels or family pensions are available, as well as cruising.

Located an hour away from Tahiti, Rangiroa is a huge atoll – the largest in French Polynesia and the second largest atoll in the world. 240 motu circle the lagoon of an area of 1,640km<sup>2</sup>. It is a natural aquarium, which Jacques Cousteau referred to as one of the most beautiful dive sites on Earth. It is a renowned divers' paradise featuring different kinds of aquatic encounters and sheltering amazing marine life.

Non-divers can also enjoy Rangiroa as the crystal clear water ensures sightings of underwater ballets visible from the naked eye or while snorkelling. Rangiroa also hosts dream beaches with pale pink sand as soft as the inside of a seashell. It is a lagoon within a lagoon...and, just like the islanders who live there, everything is suited for you to enjoy life on and under the water.

### Three good reasons to stay on Rangiroa:

#### 1 A divers' paradise:

Rangiroa is renowned worldwide for its breathtaking dive spots. Whether you take an intro dive or just a fun dive exploring the lagoon, passes and reefs, beginners and experienced divers will be blown away by the abundance and colours of the marine wildlife. Schools of multi-coloured butterfly fish, turtles, but also dolphins and sharks... a thrilling time is guaranteed!



## 2 The largest atoll of Tahiti and her Islands:

Rangiroa or Ra'iroa means "endless skies". It is the perfect name for the second largest atoll worldwide! The inside of the lagoon could hold the main island of Tahiti! The local people in Rangiroa mostly live on two of the hundreds of motu circling the atoll: Tiputa and Avatoru, close to the two passes holding the same name allowing access to the ocean.

## 3 Simply idyllic:

Not diving won't prevent you from discovering the beauties of the lagoon. The possibilities are endless: picnic on a desert motu, snorkelling above incredible coral gardens, visiting untouched islets where wild birds nest, have fun with small friendly sharks. A couple of must-sees: the "blue lagoon": nature gave birth to a small lagoon within the main lagoon and the "pink sand beach", another beautiful area to discover. These sand dunes emerge from the reef and naturally crushed seashells have given this amazing pinky shade to the place. Incredible! ■

[www.tahiti-tourisme.co.nz](http://www.tahiti-tourisme.co.nz)





# So Solomons, So Different!



Explore the hidden paradise of the South Pacific, an archipelago comprising a vast group of 992 breathtaking tropical islands. Feel the spirit of adventure and enjoy your own special piece of paradise - dive, fish, surf, hike, kayak or simply relax and discover a culture with a welcoming smile.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau  
PO Box 321, Mendana Avenue, Honiara, Solomon Islands  
call (677) 22442 or email [info@sivb.com.sb](mailto:info@sivb.com.sb)

[www.visitsolomons.com.sb](http://www.visitsolomons.com.sb)



*solomon islands*

SO SOLOMONS, SO DIFFERENT!

# Romantic Seclusion

By Gayle Dickson

Images by David Kirkland

If you dream of a holiday that comprises lots of peaceful seclusion, new discoveries, a plethora of great snorkelling, diving and fishing sites, just about as much lobster as you can possibly handle, and resort staff who go out of their way to make your stay a truly memorable one, then look no further than the Solomon Islands.

A short three-hour flight from Brisbane will have you landing at Honiara airport. You can opt to stay in Honiara for the night, or immediately hop on to a domestic flight and head for your resort. All resorts will meet you at the domestic airports and transport you to their island docks via boat.

With six major islands and over 900 smaller ones, you'll never be short of space to be alone. Wake up to the sound of lapping water. That's truly about all you'll hear apart from the odd boat heading out fishing, and perhaps the call of the birds. Enjoy sumptuous leisurely breakfasts. This is the Solomons - they don't really care what time you drag yourself out of bed!

Don the mask and fins and dive into the blue yonder where an incredible array of marine life swims leisurely, just metres from the shore. If snorkelling is what you want to do, consider island hopping on a live-a-board vessel. There are wrecks and reefs - ships, aircraft and submarines have become home to many species of marine life.

If fishing is your thing, you can

choose to cast your line in search of big game, head up rivers and estuaries, cast from the beach or go reef fishing. This is part of the coral triangle...you won't be disappointed!

Laze in a hammock and enjoy the peace. Take a boat to a neighbouring island for a romantic picnic. Hike a few jungle trails and spot the colourful birdlife, and sometimes a few war relics. Head to the nearest town for a little market shopping with the locals, hit the surfbreaks, swim in a lagoon or kayak through the mangroves.

Visit a church on a Sunday for a truly moving experience. Tour the villages and get to know the beautiful children. Enjoy bountiful lunches that offer a range of seafood, good burgers, great steaks and plenty of healthy greens.



The Solomons is not about flash hotels and late night parties. This is a place where romance abounds in droves - where seclusion is king, peace is queen, and the locals are as willing to serve you as ladies-in-waiting.

Forget everything you've ever imagined about Pacific islands - this is the Pacific at its very best; the Pacific as it used to be; the Pacific as it should be. Pack your bags and prepare for the biggest dose of romance you can imagine! 🍹



## facts:

**Solomon Airlines:**

[www.flysolomons.com](http://www.flysolomons.com)

**Virgin Australia:**

[www.virginaustralia.com](http://www.virginaustralia.com)

**Fiji Airways:**

[www.fijiairways.com](http://www.fijiairways.com)

**Air Vanuatu:**

[www.airvanuatu.com](http://www.airvanuatu.com)

[www.visitsolomons.com.sb](http://www.visitsolomons.com.sb)

# Australia

The Kimberleys 74

Blue Mountains 80





Destination  
Western Australia

# A Cruise is just the beginning

Words by Roderick Eime

Images as supplied



## It's the world's worst kept secret!

Australia's Kimberley and North West was recently voted as the top adventure cruise destination for Australians and is quickly ranking high on the global chart for 'must do' expedition cruising.

But now you've done your cruise, pulled out a thrashing barramundi from the Hunter River, gazed in awe at the dizzying precipices of the Mitchell Falls and shot the wild waters of the horizontal waterfalls. What next?

Themesmerisingancientlandscapes of the Kimberley extend way past the coast, inland to the eye-boggling Bungle Bungle (now more correctly known as the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Purnululu National Park) along the infamous Gibb River road and through some of the wildest, oldest and fascinating territory imaginable.

Kununurra and its manmade mini-ocean, Lake Argyle, is full of its own outback adventure and those keen to follow cinematic themes can trail blaze Hugh and Nicole's 'Australia' or venture to that place of nightmares... Wolfe Creek.

There are tours you can join, or the more independently minded can set off on their own self-drive adventure checking into any of these several homestead 'resorts' or international standard luxury retreats like El Questro.

Take your pick, then extend your adventure in one of Australia's newest remote destinations.

Accessing the remote Kimberley: Despite being dubbed one of the world's 'final frontiers', famous for its vastly remote and epic landscapes, accessing the Kimberley is easier than you might believe. The Kimberley Aerial Highway (a network of remote airstrips at major attractions throughout the region) allows visitors to get up close and personal to the more than 423,000 square kilometres.



Visitors can fly over extraordinary attractions such as Mitchell Falls, Windjana Gorge and the Bungle Bungle Range in World-Heritage listed Purnululu National Park, then land and join their ground tours.

For those visitors with more time, many accommodation providers are part of the 'highway', including El Questro Wilderness Park ([elquestro.com.au](http://elquestro.com.au)), Home Valley Station ([hvstation.com.au](http://hvstation.com.au)), Kimberley Coastal Camp ([kimberleycoastalcamp.com.au](http://kimberleycoastalcamp.com.au)), Faraway Bay ([farawaybay.com.au](http://farawaybay.com.au)), Kooljaman at Cape Leveque ([kooljaman.com.au](http://kooljaman.com.au)), Eco Beach ([ecobeach.com.au](http://ecobeach.com.au)), Berkeley River Lodge ([berkeleyriver.com.au](http://berkeleyriver.com.au)) and the Bungle Bungles Safari Camp ([bunglesafaricamp.com.au](http://bunglesafaricamp.com.au)).

There are half-day, full day and extended options available in fixed wing, float plane or helicopter... or visitors can create their own journeys and take a private charter. The signature drive of the Kimberley is the 660 kilometre Gibb River Road that stretches from Broome to Kununurra taking in many of the breath-taking sights along the way. In addition to the Gibb, there's several travel routes of varying lengths that allow you to explore areas such as the Dampier Peninsula, Mitchell Plateau and West Kimberley Circuit on your own self-drive journey.

Superstar celebrity (and ex-wife of Rolling Stones' front man, Mick Jagger) Jerry Hall, prefers cruising the Kimberley Coast.

Following 12,000 nominations judged by a panel of 20 travel experts, cruising the Kimberley was named as number one in its Australia's 100 Greatest Holidays Of All Time.

Luxury vessels such as those from boutique operators True North and Great Escape are a perfect way to experience the extraordinary sights only accessible from the seas and rivers.

### **Broome:**

You could easily call Broome the de facto capital of the NorthWest. Once a ramshackle outpost for pearlers and itinerant fishermen, wealth from pearls, mining and tourism has elevated the town way beyond its rough beginnings. Broome is also the major port for adventure and expedition cruisers heading out to Kimberley coast, so almost all passengers will spend some time in this remote community.

Apart from pearls and the mandatory Cable Beach camel rides, there are some excellent Aboriginal art galleries and the hovercraft rides out onto Roebuck Bay are one of the last commercial hovercraft rides available in the world. Getting around is easy and cheap on a hired scooter.

[www.broomevisitorcentre.com.au](http://www.broomevisitorcentre.com.au)





#### Kununurra:

Situated in the East Kimberley, the outback town of Kununurra is the logical end of the Gibb River Road near the NT border and the ideal location to start or finish a Gibb River Road drive. It's also the location of the famous Argyle Downs Homestead Museum, site of the original pioneering Durack family property, most of which is now submerged by the equally famous man-made Lake Argyle. If you haven't fully satisfied your cruising urge, day cruises are available on the lake.

Did you know? The volume of water in Lake Argyle exceeds 10 million cubic metres; nine times that of Sydney Harbour. Warragamba, by comparison, holds less than half that of Lake Argyle when full.

[www.visitkununurra.com](http://www.visitkununurra.com)

#### Derby:

Pronounced DERR-bee, it's actually the first European settlement and was the site of a jetty built in 1885 to service the growing pastoral industry. The streets are lined with massive boab trees and history buffs will enjoy following the Derby Pastoral Trail which leads to the wharf and takes in the Wharfinger House Museum, Pioneer Cemetery and the Old Derby Gaol. The visitor centre is at 30 Loch Street.

[www.derbytourism.com.au](http://www.derbytourism.com.au)



### Halls Creek and Fitzroy Crossing:

The two towns are located along the main Great Northern Highway and are useful stops if you were doing a loop drive from either Broome or Kununurra using the Gibb River Road in one direction. Fitzroy Crossing, as the name suggests, is set on the namesake river and the spot to base yourself for an exploration of the Tunnel Creek and Windjana Gorge National Parks. You can even stay at the historic Crossing Inn, built in 1897 as a shanty pub and trade store for long-distance travellers.

Halls Creek is an historic gold mining town located on the northern edge of the Great Sandy Desert and is where you can set off for a tour of the Bungle Bungles or, if you are so inclined, take an aerial sightseeing flight instead. The town is also the stepping off point for a driving visit to the fascinating Wolfe Creek Crater National Park where you can explore this massive, 850m wide crater. You'd have to go to Arizona to see a bigger one.

[www.hallscreektourism.com.au](http://www.hallscreektourism.com.au)

### Cruising in the Kimberley:

True North Adventure Cruises operate the 50 metre, 36-passenger luxury expedition vessel, True North II on six and 12 night itineraries throughout the Kimberley region. Their thirty years experience and intimate knowledge of the largely uncharted river and inlet system sets them apart from other similar operators in Australia's remote North West.

[www.truenorth.com.au](http://www.truenorth.com.au)

Great Escape Charter company operate the 26-metre luxury catamaran, Great Escape, and provide action-packed adventure cruises along the Kimberley Coast. Explore all of North Western Australia's hidden treasures in comfort and style, from Broome to Wyndham, the Rowley Shoals and beyond.

[www.greatescape.net.au](http://www.greatescape.net.au)

### Buccaneer Archipelago Mysteries:

The Buccaneer Archipelago is a stunningly rugged area off the Kimberley coast consisting of some 1,000 islands. The scenery is spectacular with secluded white sandy beaches, patches of rainforest,



mangrove estuaries, plunging cliffs, indigenous rock art and hidden reefs that litter offshore waters. Its distant location has kept it an unspoilt and remarkably pristine location to explore and experience.

Named by Phillip Parker King in 1820 in memory of William Dampier, a supposed buccaneer and early de-facto explorer who visited the sound in early 1688, the region is known to have been visited by early Dutch mariners who strayed south whilst travelling to Batavia in present-day Indonesia. One, Dirk Hartog, is generally believed to be the first European to sight the land in 1616...hence the title of New Holland that persisted until the early 19th century.

To add further spice to this intriguing history, researcher and author Jonathan Gray, believes the wreck of a Phoenician ship lies around the entrance to King Sound, a relic of a time, he claims,

when these ancient mariners plied Australian waters exploiting the mineral resources, trading and even marrying with the local Aboriginals.

Here too, tides of up to 11 metres are among some of the biggest in the world, and certainly the largest in Australia. In some places they are treacherously strong and unpredictable, surging up rivers and ripping through inland passages. These tides create such phenomena as the horizontal waterfall in Talbot Bay. Here the tide rushes through the gaps in the cliff which are only a few metres wide forming the effect of a horizontal waterfall. At the peak of the tidal inflow or outflow the difference in levels is some four metres, which creates an astounding picture.

The warm weather, water and remoteness of the archipelago have created an incredible breeding ground for a huge array of wildlife including crocodiles, snakes, birds, bats and, most importantly, fish. Visitors to the Buccaneer Archipelago find the fishing here exceptional and many species reside in the region in abundance. Your catch could include Barramundi, Coral Trout, Red Emperor, Trevally, Snapper Tuna and Spanish Mackerel, as well as oysters and enormous mud crabs.

Aboriginal people have lived in the archipelago for tens of thousands of years and their rock art can be found on many islands and the adjacent mainland. Using rafts of mangrove logs and canoes, tribes travelled between the islands. Indigenous groups today still visit their traditional sites and communities are established in the area. ■





## facts:

**Getting there** - domestic flights to Broome. Fly direct with Qantas to Broome from Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Darwin. For the full schedule of departure and arrival times, please visit [www.qantas.com](http://www.qantas.com)

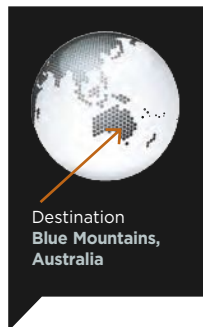
Virgin Australia (who acquired regional carrier Skywest in 2013) operates direct flights to Broome from Perth and connecting flights from all other capital cities. [www.virginaustralia.com](http://www.virginaustralia.com)

Airnorth (in alliance with Qantas) provides connections between Broome, Kununurra, Perth and Darwin in the Northern Territory as well as to Cairns, Townsville and Gold Coast in Queensland. Airnorth also provides connections between Karratha and Port Hedland. [www.airnorth.com.au](http://www.airnorth.com.au)

**International Flights to Perth**  
Perth's T1 terminal is serviced by numerous international carriers, including Air NZ, Qantas, Emirates, Cathay Pacific, Etihad, Singapore Airlines and Qatar Airways. [www.perthairport.com.au](http://www.perthairport.com.au)

[www.australiasnorthwest.com](http://www.australiasnorthwest.com)





# Majestic global dining palette

Images courtesy of Deep Hill Media





Saucy tales, exotic opulence and the odd celebrity demise. The Hydro Majestic Hotel in the Blue Mountains sits alongside the Hotel Ritz Paris, Raffles Singapore and Claridge's London as legendary havens of mischief and luxury.

With staff from around the world welcoming waves of international tourists in a distinctly Australian location, the Hydro Majestic also represents the modern face and cuisine of Australia – as it has for more than a century.

The status of the original Blue Mountains party palace as the grandest of the grand hotel in the region was restored when current owner Escarpment Group unveiled its \$35 million refurbishment in October 2014.

The spectacular Casino Lobby was stripped back to show off that stupendous dome prefabricated in Chicago and imported by original Hydro Majestic owner, department store doyenne Mark Foy.

The Wintergarden Restaurant where one takes high tea (traditional or Eastern) is bedecked in understated gold and white

elegance with enormous windows giving a breathtaking view over the Megalong Valley.

There's the Majestic Ballroom with its beautiful vaulted ceiling, the revamped Boiler House Café in the old pump house and the sophistication of black and chrome in the Belgravia accommodation lounge.

But the best way to appreciate the full magnificence of the Hydro Majestic, the building, the history and the gob-smackingly gorgeous location on the edge of the escarpment, is to stroll along the (in) famous Cat's Alley hallway, cocktail in hand, and watch the sunset over the Megalong Valley. The golden tendrils seep down the blood red walls, lighting up the peacock feathers and richly furbished lounges, and bring the original artworks of blood sports to life.

Foy, was a visionary, an ambitious and remarkable one, creating the hotel on a mountain top against all odds. Soon the fortunate, the famous, the fabulous, even the infamous, flocked to the Hydro Majestic from around the globe.

## facts:

[www.hydromajestic.com.au](http://www.hydromajestic.com.au)  
or phone + 61 (02) 4782 6885 for bookings  
and more information about the Hydro  
Majestic Hotel.



With regular festivals and events including the Roaring 20s Festival in February, Escarpment Group has returned the flounce to the old girl's skirt so the Hydro Majestic is once again the most flamboyant showgirl of Australia's first tourist destination.

The latest event was a seven-course degustation featuring traditional dishes from global locations infused with local flavours served by staff from around the world, heralds a modern era of theatrical dining for Mark Foy's "Palace in the wilderness."

Dishes such as Creole-style braised short rib, southern grits, collard greens and corn tamarillo salsa obviously originated from distant shores. However, the ingredients were sourced from a 100-mile radius around the hotel.

Rounding off the gastronomic event with lamingtons was the shared food link to Australia.

It could be said that the Hydro Majestic represents the modern face and cuisine of Australia – as it has for more than a century.

Escarpment Group General Manager, Ralf Bruegger, said: "The Hydro Majestic has always embraced cultural diversity, not because its first owner Mark Foy was politically correct but because he genuinely loved people of all races, their culture, art and food – just as we do today.

"In fact, what is seen as progressive, even outrageous today, has always been normal at the Hydro Majestic. I mean, what was normal for a man who liked to dress in his wife's clothing and held cross-dressing parties for his friends?"

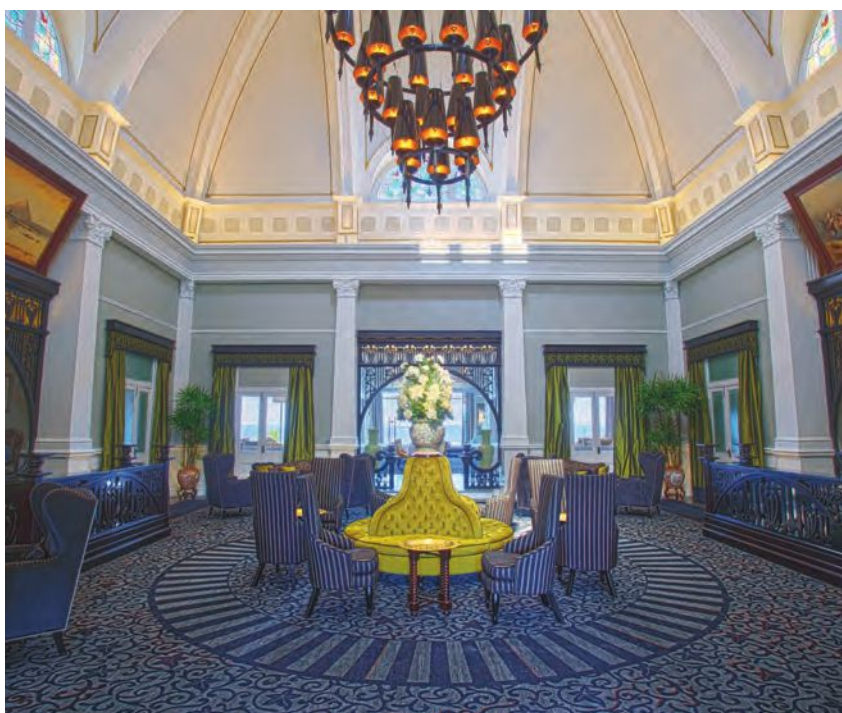
With the means to satisfy his every whim, the well-travelled Foy had the famous hotel dome pre-fabricated in Chicago and shipped to Australia. Dr George Baur of the Shoeneck health spa in Switzerland was hired to devise and

supervise a program of diets and weird and wonderful treatments. Turkish coffee at the Hydro Majestic was served by Turkish waiters, Chinese tea by Chinese waiters.

Louie ("Charlie") Goh Mong was just one of many Chinese migrants who reverted to their traditional skills post-Bathurst gold rush era around the turn of the 20th century and worked as butlers, cooks, nannies, maids and produce suppliers to inns, guesthouses and manor houses across the Blue Mountains during that time. Charlie worked as a cook at Foy's Sydney home and managed the mayhem at the Hydro Majestic for 35 years.

Today, staff from 16 language groups work at the Hydro Majestic including English, French, Canadian, Russian, Chinese (all dialects), Portuguese, Vietnamese, Spanish, Italian, Indonesian, Thai and more. Mr Bruegger is German and head chef, Mate Herceg, has a Croatian background.

"People visit the Hydro Majestic from all over the world and we must understand and accommodate their cultural needs," Mr Bruegger said. "In an internationally renowned destination such as the Blue Mountains it is expected of us and certainly received by our guests in all other mature tourism regions of the world." ■



# New Zealand

The Kinloch Club, Taupo 84  
Treetops Lodge & Estate, Rotorua 88





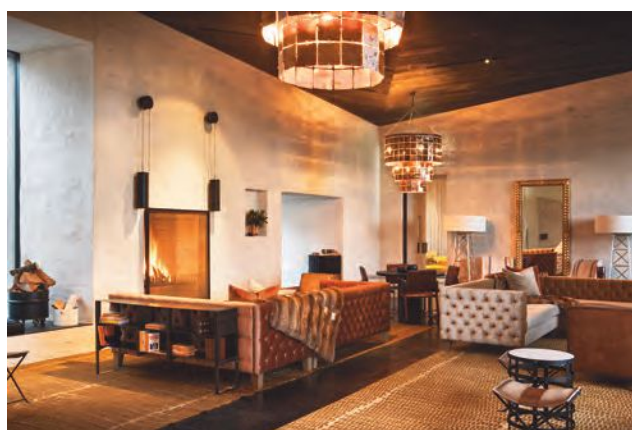
Destination  
Taupo

# Castle On The Hill... The Kinloch Club

By Gary Dickson







Take the skills and experience of one of golf's true legends, Jack Nicklaus, add in renowned architect, Andrew Patterson, mix with New Zealand-born interior designer, Virginia Fisher, and all brought together by an uber-successful luxury lodge owner in John Sax, and what you get is the stunning The Kinloch Club.

Sitting on a ridge overlooking the 18-hole Nicklaus designed golf course, The Kinloch Club is one of the best luxury lodges I have had the pleasure of staying in anywhere in the world. Expansive views across Lake Taupo only add to the ambiance.

The lodge, from the inside, feels like that of a Scottish castle (Kinloch meaning 'Head of the Lake'). Indeed, the instructions to everyone from John Sax were to achieve exactly that...but with a genuine 21st century design concept.

Once you arrive at the entrance, along the sweeping driveway, which passes beside the golf course, you'll be greeted by a lush central courtyard, which accesses the dining, relaxing and bar areas. All views from here truly are amazing.

A leisurely walk, or golf buggy ride, is all it takes to locate your villa. The one-bedroom, two-bedroom villas and Junior Suite, offer a variety

of divine elegance in understated surroundings. The views alone are worth the price of staying here.

Couple that with beautiful oak floors, full kitchens, private terraces, sumptuous bedding and stand alone baths and one could get used to 'enduring' this type of 'work'. My favourite part of any stay at a location like The Kinloch Club is the food (and wine)...and I was not disappointed. However, every time I read a review about resort/lodges/estates of this ilk, I get tired of phrases like 'locally sourced fresh produce' or 'New Zealand cuisine with a twist'...and my favourite 'garden to plate'. Surely we can come up with more inventive terms?

Well, whatever Executive Chef, Jeremy Talbot, wants to say in his pre-amble about a five-course degustation is fine by me, because those phrases encompass exactly what his ethos is and he delivers it in spades. I have eaten food at Michelin-star restaurants that are nowhere near as sublime as what was delivered to my table that evening at The Kinloch Club. I'm sure you'll concur simply by viewing the images in this article.

New Zealand really is a special country and one I'm very proud to promote when I am overseas, but there is nothing like returning to your homeland, familiar surroundings... your own castle (so to speak) and one day I hope to return to this castle...The Kinloch Club, so I can be reminded of all things that are fantastic about New Zealand.

Thank you John Sax, and thank you to all who have made this place what it is...a slice of Scotland in New Zealand. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿



#### facts:

The Kinloch Club is a short 10 minutes drive from Taupo along Whangamata Road. Flight time from Auckland is only 45 minutes or a leisurely drive is done comfortably in 3 hours.

The Kinloch Club  
261 Kinloch Road  
Kinloch, Taupo 3377  
P: + 64 7 377 8482  
E: [reservations@thekinlochclub.com](mailto:reservations@thekinlochclub.com)  
[www.thekinlochclub.com](http://www.thekinlochclub.com)





Destination  
Rotorua

# He Dreamed A Dream... Treetops Lodge & Estate

By Gary Dickson





Around 20 minutes from Rotorua, up a long, winding road and as secluded a place as you're likely to find in New Zealand, is one man's dream that achieved reality. Treetops Lodge & Estate...or, simply, Treetops as the world knows it.

It has played host to many an international celebrity, often here in New Zealand without the majority of the population having any idea. Owner, John Sax, wanted to showcase all that is great about this country to anyone that would come and appreciate the natural beauty of the lodge and it's surround... especially the majestic Bridal Veil Falls.

There are over 40 kms of trails to explore at Treetops – some more challenging than others (granted) but there is no denying the beauty on all of them.

Hiking is a big part of what the estate has to offer, along with horse trekking, fishing (there are over 60 rivers on this 2,500 acre paradise), hunting, archery and an excellent 4WD wildlife safari.

But another of John's ethos, when creating Treetops, was to ensure that guests departed in a better frame of mind than when they arrived. He wanted a sanctuary that relaxed his guests... and that is exactly what he has achieved.



The grand entrance to the main lodge is one that reminds me of magnificent fishing and hunting lodges in the backwaters of Oregon or Washington state in the U.S. – high ceilings, exposed timbers and a gigantic fireplace, with floor to ceiling windows further enhancing the views across the valley and the rest of the estate below.

Treetops offer a range of accommodation types – all nestled in amongst the forest and all as private as each other. Choose from a Valley View Villas or The Forest View Villa and reintroduce yourself with serenity and peace. There are 8 Villas, 4 Lodge Rooms, as well as The Family Retreat and Pheasant Cottage – which are ideal for groups or families.

A short walk (or pickup if you prefer) back to the lodge for dinner or breakfast, where Michelin-star dining awaits you. Quite simply the food, wine and discreet service are as sublime as any I have seen. And the pre-dinner drinks and canapés allow you to get to know your fellow guests and share in the experiences of the day.

Summing up Treetops? Well, I'm going to leave that to a recent guest (Hugo) who gave it 5 stars on TripAdvisor and put it as eloquently as I could... 'Luxury amid extraordinary surroundings'. ■



#### facts:

Treetops Lodge & Estate  
351 Kearoa Road  
RD 1, Rotorua  
P: + 64 7 333 2066  
E: [info@treetops.co.nz](mailto:info@treetops.co.nz)  
[www.treetops.co.nz](http://www.treetops.co.nz)

Treetops Winter Escapes start 1 April 2017 – savings of up to 50% can be gained on their Winter Romance or Wilderness Adventure Escapes for couples or families

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# The World's Most Inclusive Luxury Cruise Line

Part of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, Regent Seven Seas Cruises is the world's most inclusive luxury cruise line with a four-ship fleet that visits more than 375 destinations around the globe. The line's newest ship, *Seven Seas Explorer*, entered service on the 20th July 2016 and has been recognised as *The Most Luxurious Ship Ever Built™*.



The leader in the luxury cruise segment, the line's fares include:

- FREE Unlimited Shore Excursions
- FREE Unlimited WIFI
- FREE 1 Night Pre-Cruise Hotel Package in Concierge Suites and Higher
- FREE Speciality Restaurants
- FREE Unlimited Beverages including Fine Wines and Premium Spirits
- FREE Open Bars and Lounges PLUS
- FREE Pre-Paid Gratuities

Regent Seven Seas Cruises is close to completing a fleet-wide US\$125 million enhancement designed to elevate the level of elegance found throughout the fleet to the standard set by *Seven Seas Explorer*.

The new interior design debuted on *Seven Seas Navigator* in April/May 2016. *Seven Seas Voyager* has just undergone a similar enhancement programme with *Seven Seas Mariner* scheduled for dry dock in April 2017.

#### **The Fleet:**

Regent Seven Seas Cruises is the world's most inclusive luxury cruise line, with exceptional service levels and featuring award-winning and boutique all-suite vessels that are among the most spacious at sea. With an enviable staff-to-guest ration of 1 to 1.5, their intimate, luxurious ships cater to a mere 490 or 700 guests, resulting in a stellar service, no lines and no waiting.

**Seven Seas Mariner** – Part of the world's first all-suite, all-balcony fleet, *Seven Seas Mariner* exceeds even the loftiest expectations for luxury, and features:

- A wide choice of gourmet dining venues designed to appeal to the most discerning palates:
- *Compass Rose* features European-inspired continental cuisine (open seating).
- *La Veranda* is comfortably casual, offering breakfast and lunch in a buffet-style, with regional specialties (open seating).
- *Prime 7* is glamour redefined, a new and luxurious standard in steakhouse fare with its contemporary interpretation of a classic American favourite (specialty dining).

- Signature is sublime and purely French, for an experience rivaling the finest Parisian restaurants (specialty dining).
- Only 700 guests per voyage – ensuring the absolute highest level of personal service with staff to guest ratio of 1:1.6.
- Spacious all-balcony suites that range from 28 square metres to 186 square metres.
- An expansive teak pool deck including a large heated pool and two whirlpools.

**Seven Seas Voyager** – Part of the world's first all-suite, all-balcony fleet, Seven Seas Voyager recently underwent a transformational enhancement programme. Some of the enhanced features include:

- Gourmet dining venues designed to appeal to the most discerning palates:
- Compass Rose: The ship's flagship restaurant received a stunning new look with grand crystal chandeliers, rich wooden accents and celestial blue furnishings. The restaurant features a completely new menu that offers guests an unprecedented level of personal customization and choice, making it essentially the largest speciality restaurant at sea.
- La Veranda: will feature a fresh and airy design with light grey coloured flooring and accent walls which accentuate the natural light coming from the restaurant's floor-to-ceiling windows. In a major structural change, the buffet is now open to both sides of the restaurant and features a new cook-to-order grill station.
- Prime 7: is glamour redefined, a new and luxurious standard in steakhouse fare with its contemporary interpretation of a classic American favourite.
- Signatures: is sublime and purely French, for an experience rivaling the finest Parisian restaurants.
- Chartreuse: Already a guest favourite on Seven Seas Explorer, Chartreuse made its debut on Seven Seas Voyager as part of the ship's refurbishment. The restaurant features new furnishings, china, flooring and décor elements inspired by the Chartreuse on Seven Seas Explorer, along with a completely new menu.



- Pool Grill: The outdoor eating area offers a new infrared barbeque grill, so chefs can prepare savoury barbeque specialties such as steaks, chops, lamb and salmon on the open deck.
- Voyager Lounge: The marquee lounge features a beautiful new design that was inspired by a modern interpretation of a French cabaret. A timeless elegant décor with large champagne-coloured chandeliers cascading down over crimson coloured loveseats along a wall of oversized windows provides guests with the perfect locale to enjoy live nightly musical entertainment.



- Only 700 guests per voyage ensuring the absolute highest level of personal service with staff to guest ratio of 1:1.6.
- Spacious all-balcony suites that range from 28 square metres to 186 square metres.
- An expansive teak pool deck including a large heated pool and two whirlpools.
- In addition to her elegant new décor, the ship will debut five new production shows in the Constellation Theater.

**Seven Seas Navigator** – The fleet's most intimate ship, Seven Seas Navigator offers unparalleled levels of luxury with some of the highest space and staff ratios at sea, allowing guest to explore the globe in style and comfort, and features:

- Exquisite dining at three restaurants – including the iconic Prime 7 steakhouse, the flagship Compass Rose, and the spacious and comfortably casual La Veranda – allowing guests to dine wherever, whenever and with whomever they choose, at no additional charge.
- Only 490 guests per voyage ensuring the absolute highest level of personal service with staff to guest ratio of 1:1.4.
- All-suite accommodations with ocean views, the majority with private balconies.
- A teak pool deck, the idea spot to lounge the day away or go for a swim in the large heated pool.



**Seven Seas Explorer** – Hailed as The Most Luxurious Ship Ever Built™, Seven Seas Explorer is setting a new standard for luxury cruise holidays, and features:

- Only 750 guests per voyage ensuring the absolute highest level of personal service with an intimate staff to guest ratio of 1:1.35.
- The one-of-a-kind, opulent 360-square metre, two-bedroom Regent Suite with in-room spa retreat – the first at sea.
- Lavish gourmet restaurants offering an eclectic array of options, including:
  - Pacific Rim: a dramatic new Pan-Asian specialty restaurant (specialty dining).
  - Chartreuse: evokes memories of a chic Parisian fine dining restaurant, featuring a classic French menu with a modern twist (specialty dining).
- Luxuriously appointed lounges and theatres with a wide variety of complimentary libations, live musical performances and breathtaking production shows.
- The two-tiered, 694-seat Constellation Theater, which pays homage to the glamour of Hollywood's golden age, with the music and dance of world-renowned entertainers.
- The Observation Lounge brings to life the opulence and indulgences of the roaring 1920s. Floor to ceiling windows surround the room, providing guests with incredible ocean vistas.
- Exclusive Gourmet Explorer Tours offer guests the unique opportunity to experience the culinary culture of the world's most delicious destinations. Guests will savour authentic flavours of a region, venture out to local markets to find exotic spices, sample delicious wines at breathtaking estates and savour gourmet meals expertly prepared by renowned chefs.
- Exclusive Culinary Arts Kitchen, the brand's first cooking school at sea, expands guests' culinary skills in an environment reminiscent of prestigious French cooking schools.



The Seven Seas Mariner will undergo a massive renovation in April 2017. The Seven Seas Navigator and Seven Seas Voyager have all undergone recent transformational enhancement and now boast the same elegant style and attention to detail featured on Seven Seas Explorer, the most luxurious ship ever built, providing all RSSC ships with a consistent look and feel. ■

[www.rssc.com](http://www.rssc.com)



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## Exclusive Arts Café aboard Silver Muse

Silversea Cruises, the world's leading luxury small ship cruise line, recently announced further details of its all-new Arts Café, exclusive to Silver Muse. Silversea's new flagship vessel is set to launch in April 2017, with the Arts Café ensuring there is a unique space, evoking the ambiance of an art gallery, where guests are able to relax and unwind, surrounded by some exquisite pieces of art.







This extraordinary venue is in addition to the eight industry-defining restaurants aboard Silver Muse, highlighting the ultra-luxury cruise lines' unparalleled commitment to dining and culinary options.

Amber Wilson, Managing Director Asia-Pacific, said "Nestled cosily on deck eight is the all-new Arts Café. Hosting varied, exciting and frequently changing exhibitions, the Arts Café will showcase paintings and sculptures from a broad range of talented artists. The distinctive design of the venue is a relaxing getaway and offers daytime cuisine in the form of a café and deli-bar. Come early evening, the venue transforms in to a lively, evening cocktail lounge, where guests can retreat to one of the comfortable chairs, grab a drink and relax, whilst immersing themselves in the incredible view. Whether guests prefer the gentle breeze of the terrace or the sophistication of the inside, a superlative experience is always assured."

A range of new renderings of this exquisite café highlight the extraordinary space which will be available to all guests aboard Silver Muse.

The Arts Café is an extension of the Lefebvre family's love of art. Silversea Cruises has been long-known for its commitment to beautiful artwork, with some of Silversea's vessels, such as Silver Shadow, displaying pieces from many well-known artists including Picasso and Chagall. The Arts Café continues the family's tradition of sharing art and offers a distinctive highlight, only found aboard Silver Muse.

Calling at 34 countries and 130 ports in 2017 alone, Silver Muse will redefine ocean travel, enhancing the small-ship intimacy with spacious all-suite accommodations that are the hallmark of the Silversea experience. The addition of Silver Muse will expand Silversea's fleet to nine ships and will, once again, significantly raise the bar in the ultra-luxury cruise market. ■

[www.silversea.com](http://www.silversea.com)



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TRAVEL AGENTS

# Stay Longer...Experience More

As Azamara Club Cruises prepares to bring its second ship, Azamara Journey, to Australia and New Zealand in February, the company has announced an evolution of its position as the cruise line for discerning travellers. Known for its specialisation in Destination Immersion, Azamara has announced its new, even stronger proposition: Stay Longer. Experience More. Immersive itineraries allow guests to cruise global and connect local from their 'Boutique Hotel at Sea'.



“Within this evolved positioning, there are two powerful guest deliverables,” says Larry Pimentel, President and CEO of Azamara Club Cruises. “The first is we’re shifting from enabling our guests to immerse themselves in the destination, to delivering over one thousand new and existing destination experiences for guests to select from in over 70 countries.

“These experiences provide the second powerful deliverable: one-to-one human connection. Our land product will be curated to ensure guests get to connect in a personalised and unique way with the people in the destinations they visit. This may occur

through people to people interaction, cultural experiences, enjoying local food and beverages, music, events and so on,” Pimentel concluded.

With its two ships Azamara Journey and Azamara Quest, the line’s enhanced brand position will continue to be grounded in Destination Immersion, including longer stays and more overnights, but will now go well beyond that. It is comprised of three pillars that collectively will provide an extraordinary experience on land and at sea:

- Immersive Itineraries
- Cruise Global, Connect Local destination experiences

- Boutique Hotels at Sea  
Immersive Itineraries

Azamara Club Cruises pioneered Longer Stays and More Overnights so guests can make the most of a destination when it comes alive at night. The boutique brand continues to evolve and grow this standard of immersive itinerary, offering over 250 overnight and late night stays of 8pm or later per year – bringing the number of late night port calls to roughly 50% of all calls.

Curated itineraries bring the ships to exotic and marquee ports, and because of the line’s two ships’ intimate sizes, they are able to dock close to town centres. Over 50%

of the line's ports are ports larger ships can't visit. Azamara will deliver experiences in over 200 ports worldwide in 2017 and 2018, 35 of which Azamara will be visiting for the first time.

Brand new for Azamara will be Country Intensive Voyages, which will allow guests to travel deeper and experience more of a given country, as the majority of the destinations are concentrated in one country such as Japan, Italy, Spain, Norway, New Zealand, Australia, Greece, Croatia and more.

An expanded palette of World Events and Themed Voyages will be offered, including the Monaco Grand Prix, the World Cup, British Open, the Venice Redentore Festival, as well as Wine and Yoga themed voyages with more to come.

#### **Cruise Global, Connect Local**

As part of the unveiling, the brand is also announcing Cruise Global, Connect Local - a series of land programmes designed to deliver personalised and authentic experiences, by day and night.

This umbrella programme includes land offerings ranging from a variety of shore excursion groupings such as

Nights Local for nightlife experiences such as a guided visit to a theatre, local pub, or a cultural performance; and Meet Local, which offers immersive cultural experiences that connect guests to local people at their homes, farms and villas. Additionally there is Stay Local, which offers overland tours during the voyage and pre and post voyage experiences.

And of course, Azamara's popular complimentary AzAmazing Evenings Events will continue to bring the destinations' local culture to life.

New Cruise Global, Connect Local experiences offered on Australia and New Zealand cruises include the following:

#### **Cruise Global, Meet Local: Akaroa Cooking School Akaroa, New Zealand**

Meet the incredible chefs at the Akaroa Cooking School who will introduce you to modern New Zealand cuisine. The culinary adventure begins at the School's stunning location overlooking the ocean. Enjoy the chefs' warm hospitality and sip a cup of coffee paired with freshly-baked pastries from the kitchen.

Then, your team of chefs will take you step-by-step through your four-course menu. Sample the fresh ingredients of the Banks Peninsula as you learn about the region's unique flavours. Admire the catch of the day and other regional produce. Discover a selection of fruits and vegetables grown in the cooking school's garden and learn new cooking techniques. Then, indulge in a four-course New Zealand meal paired with leading kiwi wines. Lonely Planet ranked the Akaroa Cooking School among the top 10 places in the world to learn how to cook local cuisine.

#### **Cruise Global, Taste Local: Local Flavours of Hobart Hobart, Australia**

Experience an immersive look at the culinary riches of Hobart on an exclusive tour limited to 12 guests and led by the ship's Executive Chef. Join your Chef and a local guide at historic Salamanca Market in search of ingredients for the day's meals, guests will learn how to pick the best local produce, before returning to the ship for lunch with your new friends (including the Chef).



In the afternoon, regroup and join the ship's Sommelier for a visit to the Shene Estate & Distillery. Enjoy an insightful look at the making of various spirits accompanied by a tasting of different varieties. Afterwards, it's the main event – a private dinner on the ship prepared by your Executive Chef using ingredients from the morning's market sojourn.

**Cruise Global, Bike Local:  
Takaro Trails & Mission Estate  
Biking Exploration  
Napier, New Zealand**

Spend a day immersed in the dramatic landscape of the New Zealand lowlands on a bike tour on Azamara-branded bicycles led by a local guide. Begin in the port town of Ahuriri with a ride along its West Quay. See weathered fishing boats dotting the harbour on the way to the Pandora Estuary. Follow the trails of these protected wetlands and stop at a local bird sanctuary for a look at the exotic species that call New Zealand home. The ride continues through low-lying wetlands, an area that was once

a tidal flat, and which rose nearly seven feet during an epic earthquake in 1931. Finally, arrive in the town of Taradale and round out the tour at New Zealand's Oldest Winery, the Mission Estate for refreshments.

**Cruise Global, Walk Local:  
Melbourne Walking Tour  
Melbourne, Australia**

Experience the sights and sounds of Melbourne on an excursion that combines a tram ride with a leisurely stroll through the city streets. Begin the day as so many locals do, by catching one of the city's famous trams. Sit back and enjoy a scenic ride that drops you in the very heart of Melbourne. From here, it's time to explore on an up-close-and-personal walking tour than winds past modern monuments, historic architecture and significant landmarks. See Melbourne's Town Hall, majestic St. Paul's Cathedral, and the old Flinders Street Railway Station, before making your way to Federation Square, one of the city's favourite gathering spots, for some free time to explore local shops, cafes and bars.

**Boutique Hotels at Sea**

Azamara's smaller, boutique and intimate ships now feature contemporary and elegant design, having been completely reimaged and remodelled in 2016.

Known for their authentic, friendly and personalised service the line is also announcing a new hallmark - the brand's destination focused programming onboard, ranging from local culinary and beverage selections, to travel movies, lectures and panel discussions on destinations and other relevant topics, as well as entertainment.

Azamara will continue to offer more included onboard amenities, from gratuities and select standard spirits, international beers and wines, to bottled water, soft drinks, specialty coffees & teas, English butler service for suite guests and more.

Azamara is more than a cruise line; it's the brand that delivers a rich destination experience worldwide by staying longer and allowing guests to experience more. ■

[www.azamaracruises.com](http://www.azamaracruises.com)





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# Wendy Wu Tours

Wendy Wu Tours operate fully escorted tours and independent packages to China, India, Vietnam and neighbouring destinations such as Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Borneo, Central Asia, Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand and South Korea.



Wonders of China Li River

The company opened its doors in Auckland in 2015 but has been operating for over 20 years now and has offices in Sydney, London and New York...together with operation offices in Shanghai, Vietnam and India.

Wendy Wu escorted her first tour in May 1994 and Wendy Wu Tours Pty Ltd has been in operation since July 1998 and has developed a wide range of touring options appealing to a broad range of travel tastes.

With the continuous and effective formula of 'fully inclusive' tours each product has been carefully constructed to provide clients with the very best each country has to offer, as well as a diversity of regions and attractions.



Grand Tour of China-Terracotta Warriors



Kah Mosque, Kashgar

The company endeavours to not only provide tour members with the 'must see' attractions in each country, but to constantly create innovative programs to previously unreachable areas ensuring the company a position at the forefront of the tourism boundaries, but more importantly servicing clients' on-going needs.

A prime example of such programs is the Tibetan Dreams Tour, which saw Wendy Wu Tours escorting the first group from the western world to Lhasa, Tibet (via the most scenic overland route) through China. A great success, this tour inspired the creation of Discovery Tours featuring epic journeys in Asia.

Wendy Wu Tours was the first operator to conduct tours along the original Silk Road route - overland from Turpan to Kashgar, a popular tour for the more adventurous.

In 2012 the company re-introduced Myanmar to its already comprehensive product range with three departures of a single tour - a move that was to lead to 11 departures of three different itineraries for 2017.

2013 saw the arrival of private departures for popular group tours and deluxe river cruising in China



Hoi An, Vietnam

along with deluxe tours in India and Indochina, aimed at reaching a broader range of potential customers in the outbound travel market.

In 2015 Wendy marked 21 years since taking the first "China Highlights" tour in 1994 and opened their fifth office here in Auckland. The year also saw the introduction of the Discovery Tours range - part of the WWT's new product range incorporating Classic Tours, Deluxe Tours, Discovery Tours and

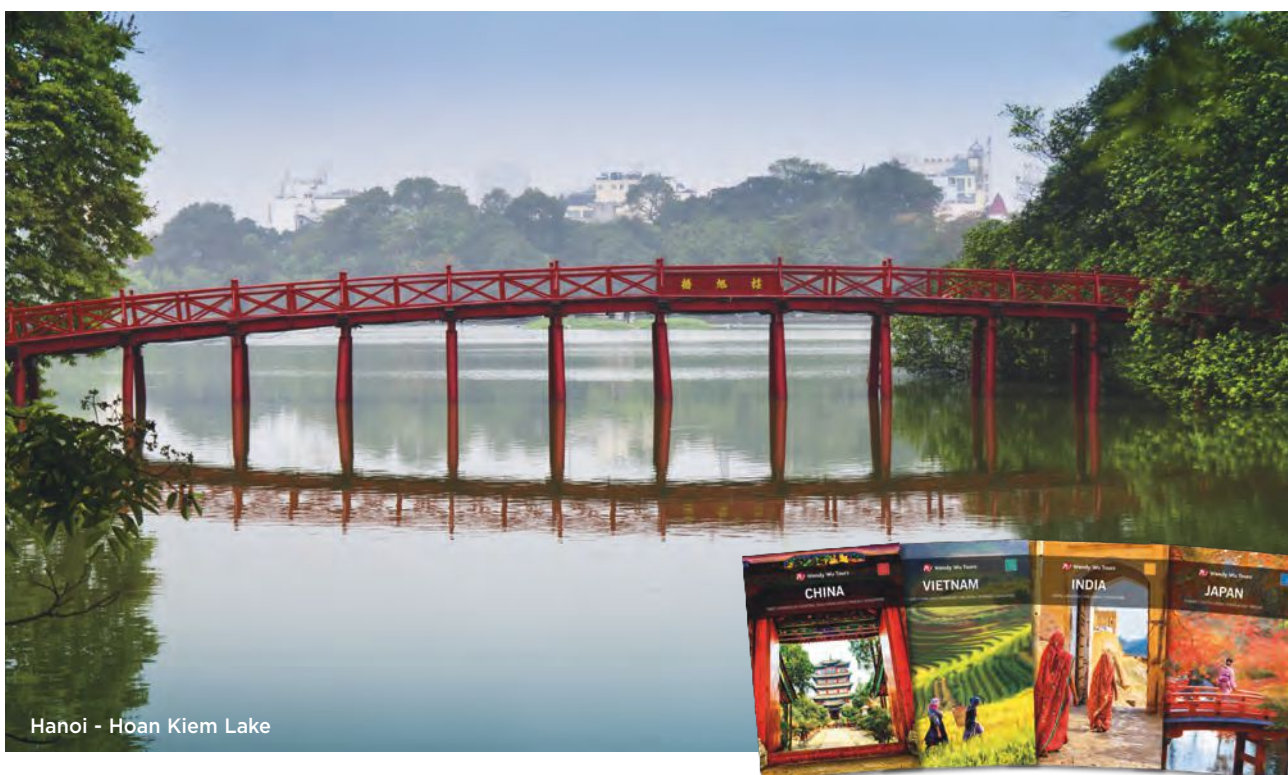
Independent holidays range.

Wendy has assiduously kept out of the limelight; so much so that many people close to the travel industry ask her team, "Is there a real Wendy Wu?" Wendy currently resides in London with her husband and two young sons.

Wendy Wu was born in China to parents who were graduates from medical schools. Whilst an infant, her parents were sent to Tibet to establish a hospital.



A China Experience-Forbidden City



Hanoi - Hoan Kiem Lake

Her father was the hospital administrator and her mother a specialist, who only retired a few years ago so she could spend more time with her grandchildren...Wendy's twins.

Wendy says "The first tour I ever designed and organised - China Highlights - left Australia in April 1994. This is the little tour that started the whole thing."

There were pioneering and prestigious milestones along the way, including the first Western tours to the Nine Villages Valley (Jiuzhaigau, Sichuan) and Zhangjiajie - reportedly the inspiration for the landscapes in the movie Avatar, ten years later. Also in 1999, Wendy organised the first group to visit Everest Base Camp from the Tibetan side and in 2008 was appointed as the official ticket supplier to the Beijing Olympic Games.

She adds, "Twenty-one years is a very long time. Sometimes when I am contemplating life's path, I regret not having done everything quickly enough nor on a big enough scale. Luckily, most of the time, I am content for I have learnt so much and have so many great people to work with."

Wendy Wu Tours will keep evolving to continue to be the leading experts in travel across China and Asia. 🍷

[www.wendywutours.co.nz](http://www.wendywutours.co.nz)

# Malaysia Airlines

By Rawdon Christie



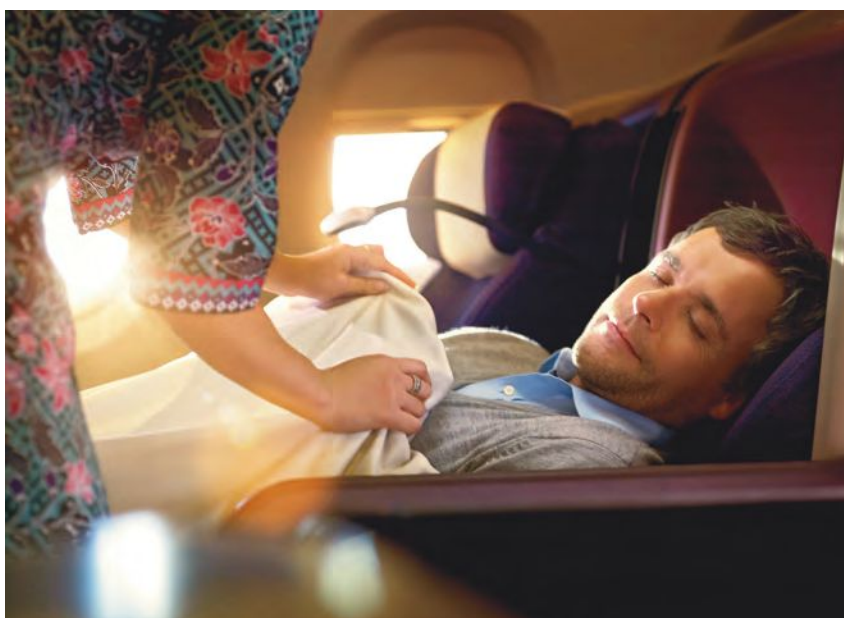
"NZ to Europe...travel cheaper than ever" was the headline on one popular news site the very day I booked to fly to London.

It was a headline gleefully devoured, given that 'price' is the number one consideration for me when choosing who to fly with. Price, followed by travel time and safety.

A quick scour of the options between New Zealand and Europe (and there are around twenty to choose from) proved the headline right - long haul flying is so cheap that a Business Class return was going to cost me less than \$6,000.

Here's the catch though - most of the low-cost Business fares are

with one of the Chinese carriers new to the NZ-UK market. Probably all comfortable, reliable airlines, but I've never used them nor heard much about them, apart from the lengthy stopovers in China they often impose on their passengers, stretching the trip out to well over 30 hours and beyond.



But there was one familiar carrier who I've used several times before and who offered the quickest journey of them all...Malaysia Airlines. For \$5,400. With a stopover of just two hours in Kuala Lumpur - flight time, all up, just over 27 hours. In state-of-the-art lie-flat Business Class beds.

So where's the catch? There isn't one. It's certainly no secret that the cruel events of 2014

could have potentially ruined the company forever, but they're fighting back from that dark chapter. A 'turnaround' initiative has been launched targetting a return to profitability by 2018.

The airline is working hard on revenue generation with aggressive marketing and sales initiatives, such as the all-time lowest economy return fare to London of all airlines (little more than \$1,200 NZD) and

now a Business class return for under \$5,500.

The Business Class cabin refurbishment on the A330 from Auckland to Kuala Lumpur is one that Malaysia Airlines is justifiably proud of - only 27 seats, each with a 110cm pitch converting into a fully flat 195cm bed. The majority of seats have direct aisle access thanks to the 1-2-1 and 1-2-2 seat layout.

The entertainment is courtesy of a 16-inch touch screen in-flight system. It doesn't offer the most exciting of programming choices, but there's a decent enough library of movies, and if you really want to maximise your viewing, you can check the 'Going Places' magazine online before leaving and plan what you can fit in to the 10 hour 50 minute flight.

Another online search worth doing before your flights is a 'chef on call' service that allows you to pick and choose from 20 dining options days before boarding the plane.

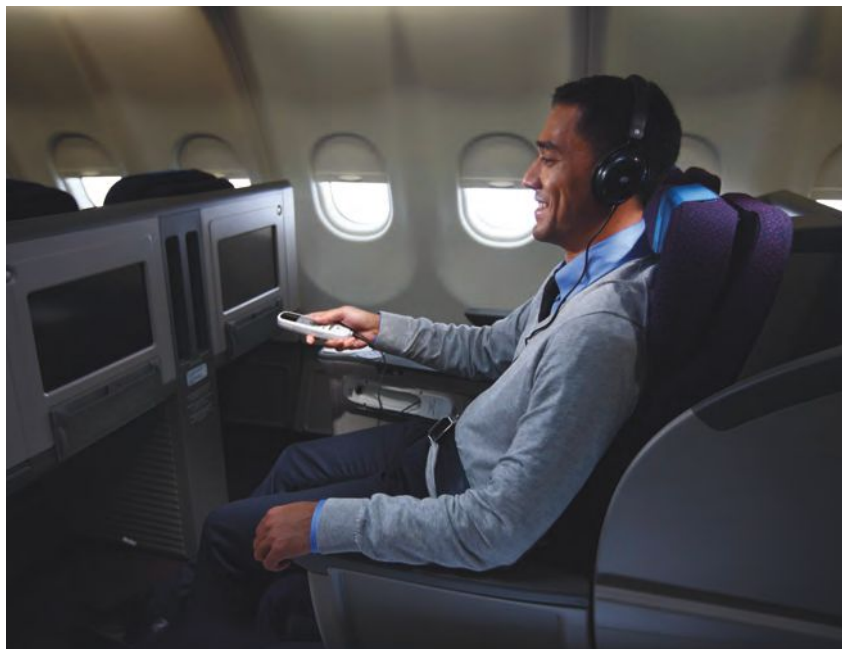
This frustratingly didn't work for me, but it's a feature that showcases the 'personal touch' that Malaysia Airlines is putting so much of its energy in to.

The good news for me, though, was that even though disappointed that my 'chef on call' orders hadn't made it to the plane, the food provided on the mainstream menu was fresh, creative and plentiful (my pick was the lamb biryani, with melt-in-the-mouth pieces of meat that had the succulent texture of lamb that had fallen from a slow-cooked shank).

The 'personal touch' is an element of any airline, any consumer service, that cannot be underestimated. The swankiest new cabin can be provided with lie-flat this, touch-screen that, but in my opinion it counts for little if the carrier cannot deliver the personal touch. In Malaysia Airlines' case, the cabin staff were never far away, working tirelessly to help passengers feel at ease.

This was a cabin crew who, it appears, take pride in the work they do. There is still work to do - the A380 from Kuala Lumpur to London didn't boast the shiny, sleek new 'sleep pods' that the A330 had from Auckland.

That said, the seat configuration of 2-2-2 still offered lie-flat beds, and my earlier online seat choice had allowed me to select a seat



with nobody next to me. Malaysia Airlines is still working on other improvements, such as introducing on-board Wi-Fi, smartening up its lounges and providing tastier food; a new codeshare partnership with Emirates is giving Malaysia Airlines' customers a seamless international network.

But for travellers such as myself, the real success of this airline going

forward (apart from the fresh cream chocolate eclairs served up by Malaysia Airlines' Heathrow lounge) will be down to those criteria that I mentioned at the beginning - price, travel time and safety.

On all three counts, Malaysia Airlines has won itself back a once-loyal customer, who really wants this airline to succeed. 🇲🇾

[www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com)



# Singapore Airlines

## You're (still) a great way to fly



I remember the Singapore Airlines marketing campaign from a few (too many) years ago. 'Singapore Girl... you're a great way to fly'. The mantra still remains and is relevant to all their staff, the food, aircraft, seating and entertainment. Class is permanent as they say.

Recently, I was allowed to board my Airbus A380, docked at Gate 15 Auckland Airport, for my flight to Singapore a few seconds before any fellow passengers so I could get a good look at the new Premium Economy cabin.

The 2-4-2 configuration and new, comfortable seats would certainly make for a more settled flight than any economy cabin that most airlines could offer on this 10 and a half hour flight.





A new level of food is also on offer and being in a completely separate cabin makes the extra cost of flying Premium Economy a worthwhile 'investment'. Tip: Choose the front row of this cabin...more leg-room.

But I was headed upstairs where my Business Class seat (21A) waited.

The entire configuration of a Singapore Airlines A380 is a bit unusual for me. A dozen Suites (cue the Nicole Kidman advert) are downstairs with Premium Economy and the majority of the Economy seating, whilst upstairs the 60 Business Class seats sit ahead of a further 12 rows of Economy. I know the reason, but I have always felt that travelling 'upstairs' on an A380 brought forth that bygone era of exclusivity with air travel...much like the 'bubble' on the 747-400s did 'back in the day'.

Anyway, there is no doubt that despite my emotional shortcomings about the layout Singapore Airlines (SQ) still encompasses four things I have always loved about travelling on SQ...the size of their seats, the beautifully groomed and always attentive hosts, the food and the in-flight entertainment. All these make travelling on Singapore Airlines an experience in itself.



I have heard many airlines in recent years state that they want the customer to feel as though their holiday or destination experience starts 'the minute they walk on to the plane'. Singapore Airlines delivers this...most others don't.

The widest seat in its class boasts richly upholstered leather and is up to 34-inches wide. With concealed stowage space to place your personal belongings each seat gives you more

personal space, and when you're ready to turn in, your seat easily transforms into a spacious fully-flat bed complete with linen, duvet and pillows.

People who know me know that I rarely sleep a lot on planes so food, service and entertainment to me are critical when I choose an airline.

After all, it's not often you get to enjoy a meal created by a celebrated chef...let alone eight. That's correct



- not just one, but eight world-renowned chefs form Singapore Airline's International Culinary Panel (ICP). Inspired by their culture and experiences, and the places SQ fly to, their team of celebrated chefs are constantly creating new dishes for you.

Cabin pressure changes the way you perceive taste. Rich flavours become mild. Aromas are subtle. Nuances are missed. That's why SQ tests all their chefs' creations under pressure, literally. They bring their dishes into a simulated pressurised cabin, and spend hours there, sampling and adjusting the flavours, so the food can taste its best for you to enjoy at 30,000 feet...and above.

Singapore Airline's KrisWorld inflight entertainment is as award-winning as any other airline flying the world's skies. Contents, thoughtfully created with you in mind, comes with an impressive selection of over 1,000 entertainment options... movies, television programmes, music, games and apps; a video touchscreen handset, and an 18-inch HD enabled personal LCD with noise-cancelling headphones.

With this type of experience in the sky ten and a half hours (please excuse the upcoming pun)...flew by. Arriving suitable sated, refreshed and ready for my four-day whirlwind journey around new and exciting things to do and see in their 'home town', Singapore Airlines is, without a doubt one of my all time favourite airline. Always has been...always will be! 🍷

[www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com)



Premium Economy Class seating



# First Smart Shuttle unveiled in Christchurch

The future arrived at Christchurch Airport recently, with the introduction of the fully autonomous Smart Shuttle for New Zealand's first on-road research trial. The Smart Shuttle will carry 15 people, has no steering wheel and is electric powered.

Christchurch Mayor, Lianne Dalziel, says Christchurch is well known as the Garden City, but is also the home of innovation and creativity.

"Autonomous electric vehicles are part of our future. They are coming ready or not and I'd rather be ready. Christchurch has become a city of opportunity...a place where anything is possible. The significance of attracting this project to Christchurch at this time cannot be over-stated. This is an incredibly exciting time in our history."

Christchurch Airport Chief Executive, Malcolm Johns, says the airport team is keen to understand how autonomous shuttles might operate at Christchurch Airport and how people may react and interact with them.

"We can see the potential for driverless vehicles to transform and enhance mobility and transport options on the airport campus. We want to explore the possibility of



deploying autonomous vehicles to assist people moving around our campus efficiently and sustainably, so we formed a partnership with HMI Technologies to consider how we might make this happen."

HMI Technologies is New Zealand's leading Intelligent Transport System (ITS) provider and Dave Verma, Director of Australasian Driverless Vehicle Technologies, says the company is involved in the vehicle trial for three key reasons.

"Firstly as an intelligent transport systems innovator, our R&D and business development teams will

get vital hands-on experience. We also hope the trial will prove the efficacy of autonomous vehicles to commercial operators like Christchurch Airport, and to government decision makers. Additionally we want the New Zealand public and students to have the opportunity to participate and provide feedback on the experience. HMI sees that the AV vehicle technology is emerging at a rapid pace and there are opportunities for New Zealand to be at the forefront of this technology. We are an established operator and innovator in the intelligent transport systems industry, so are well positioned to be an early adopter and facilitator for trials and commercial applications."

The New Zealand based and funded trial will begin in the next few weeks on private roads on the airport campus. ■

[www.cial.co.nz](http://www.cial.co.nz)

## Madeira in a Nutshell

Author: Anita Montonen

Green and mountainous Madeira is one of the world's most beautiful islands and a popular tourist destination throughout the year. This paradise of flowers and plants, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, is famous for Madeira wine, a pleasant climate, breathtaking landscapes, flowers, handicrafts, Christmas illuminations and New Year's celebrations and fireworks.

### Madeira in a Nutshell

There is information on and a map of Funchal, the capital and the only large city on the island. Containing



many historical buildings, museums and traditional sightseeing spots, Funchal is a busy and international city with a population of over 100,000 and Madeira's main hub of trade, tourism and

culture.

For the third time, the Madeira Islands were elected by the "World Travel Awards" organisation as Europe's Leading Island Destination for 2016. Madeira competed in this category alongside other tourist destinations such as The Canary Islands, The Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Malta and Cyprus.

'Madeira in a Nutshell' includes all

the necessary information a traveller needs to know about the island of Madeira.

- Nearly 300 colour photos
- Almost 200 attractions presented
- More than 70 topical festivals and events
- Almost 300 useful words and phrases in Portuguese, also a food vocabulary on local food and drink
- Madeira wine, vineyards and wine museums
- Local flowers, plants and trees
- More than 30 parks and gardens detailed
- Nearly 40 sports and activities that can be done on the island
- Geography, history, culture and art
- Tips for souvenirs, shopping centres and shopping streets
- Activities for children and teenagers

[www.troubador.co.uk](http://www.troubador.co.uk)

# Hawaiian Airlines

By Rawdon Christie



It may not be the most conventional way to start a flight review, but I am beginning with the end...the landing. Quite simply the smoothest, gentlest landing I've ever experienced.

Be it the pilot, the plane, the weather, some unique surface on Honolulu's runway, it was imperceptible enough for me and my travel partner

to turn to each other with eyebrows raised...before turning back to the window to gauge what weather awaited us.

A smooth landing - so what? Hardly a factor that will determine which airline you may choose over another, but there is a point to this...it symbolised to me my whole Hawaiian Airlines experience.

Calm, effortless, smooth. Nothing fancy, nothing extravagant, just a cool, efficient service getting me and my fellow passenger from A to B.

Even at check-in, when we found out we didn't have the right paperwork to enter the U.S., we were quietly and efficiently directed to a nearby Flight Centre booth for an urgent application.



There was no eye-rolling when we returned 15 minutes later with the required authorisation in our passports and successfully checked in.

Our plane for the 8 hour 55 minute flight was an Airbus A332 jet...one of Hawaiian Airlines' 32 trans-pacific aircraft. The plane is divided into three classes - Coach (or economy), Extra Comfort and First.

'First' (in American lingo) really means 'Business'...eighteen recliner seats in need of an upgrade. A new Premium Cabin was introduced in late 2016 and offers lie-flat seating and cuisine from Hawai'i's top chefs.

But for this particular flight, I had opted for the Extra Comfort class, where the seats are identical to the Coach seats but they boast an extra 13cm of legroom, some priority services and extra benefits such as an amenities kit.

The question is, of course, are these extras worth the additional \$190 of your precious holiday budget? And my answer is...mixed.

I didn't notice any priority services; the amenities kit was a nice touch and suitably Hawaiian (but I've never chosen a seat based on a lip balm and a hand cream), so it comes down to that extra legroom.



Our outbound flight was a night flight, leaving at 12.30am, so sleep was the goal to arrive fresh-ish the next morning. The extra legroom certainly made for a comfier flight, but the seats are still economy seats and therefore still not easy to sleep in for too long. The plane was also only half full, so there was plenty of room to spread yourself through the economy cabin without having to spend the extra \$190.

But the return journey, with a full flight, was where we got our money's

worth. The ease of being able to walk comfortably past your neighbour, the extra stretch-room to enjoy a more relaxed read of a book or watch of a movie, the feeling of space that is rare in a full economy cabin. There's no doubt we arrived fresher, and were also some of the first to get off the plane.

The food? Nothing fancy - a pre-packaged snack and a hot meal which, as with so many airlines, tasted better than it looked.



All meals are of course brought to passengers by the cabin crew, who don't waste too much energy on airs and graces. They conduct their business in a calm, professional manner, dressed in a relaxed style in (of course) Hawaiian shirts.

When I say there are no airs and graces, this doesn't mean the crew were rude...quite the opposite. Hawaiian Airlines won top honours at the 2016 Skytrax World Airline Awards after being named recipient of the Best Airline Staff - North America. It's an award the airline is proud of, given that it's voted for by the passengers.

But this is straightforward, low-cost, value flying. You want extra legroom? You pay for it. You want a dining experience? You go Business Class.

You want a smooth landing? Well, THAT was free, and as good a reason as any to say Aloha to Hawaiian Airlines. 🍹

[www.hawaiianairlines.co.nz](http://www.hawaiianairlines.co.nz)





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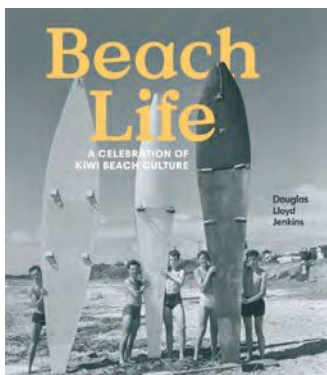
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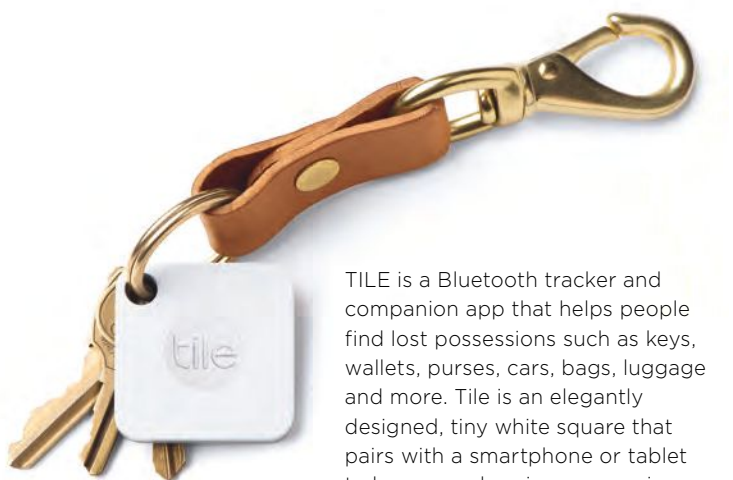
Beach Life by Douglas Lloyd Jenkins is a fascinating account of how the beach has influenced New Zealand lifestyle, culture and identity. A colourful account of the pioneering trends and pivotal influences that have shaped Kiwis enduring attraction to the beach and the lasting impact the beach has had on every aspect of New Zealand society. [www.penguin.co.nz](http://www.penguin.co.nz)



STM's ever-popular Grace Collection features a range of chic and sophisticated bags and cases that protect and organise digital lives. The Grace range is designed specifically for women and effortlessly strikes a balance between simplicity and style. Each product features beautifully textured fabrics, prints and colours that are matched with thoughtful designs and delightful details including premium zippers and trims.

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TILE is a Bluetooth tracker and companion app that helps people find lost possessions such as keys, wallets, purses, cars, bags, luggage and more. Tile is an elegantly designed, tiny white square that pairs with a smartphone or tablet to become a homing companion for lost things. Users can simply open the app and ring any item that is in Bluetooth range or see its last known location on a map. Tile also works in reverse, allowing consumers to ring their smartphone with the push of a button on their Tile device itself even if the phone is left on silent mode.

[www.thetileapp.com](http://www.thetileapp.com)

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Lisa's new dips are inspired by global flavours. Try Greek Yoghurt with lemon, mint and butter beads; or Mexican chipotle with coriander, lime and red kidney beans; or Thai Sriracha with roasted capsicum, sweet chilli and butter beans! [www.lisas.co.nz](http://www.lisas.co.nz)



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# Where In The World is... Wall...South Dakota, U.S.A.



We wanted to let President Trump know that he doesn't need to 'build a wall' as he already has one...albeit a little further North of the Mexican border. Welcome to Wall, South Dakota.

Wall (Lakota name for the area "Town alongside the Badlands") is a town in Pennington County, South Dakota, United States. The population was 766 at the 2010 census.

Wall was platted in 1907 when the Chicago and North Western Railroad was extended to that point. The town was incorporated in 1908, and Wall was named from the nearby steep Badlands.

The town is most famous for the Wall Drug Store, which opened as a small pharmacy in 1931, during



the Depression, but eventually developed into a large roadside tourist attraction. The National Grasslands Visitor Center is located in Wall.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a

total area of 2.22 square miles (5.75 km<sup>2</sup>), of which, 2.17 square miles (5.62 km<sup>2</sup>) of it is land and 0.05 square miles (0.13 km<sup>2</sup>) is water. Wall has been assigned the ZIP code 57790 and the FIPS place code 68380.■

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