


TravelBITS


ALL ABOARD!

 Trainshares Inc. is offering a private rail car experience with a unique twist — you can reserve a whole car or you can just reserve a single room on a vintage rail car on a weekly or timeshare basis. Trainshares will begin 8-day vacation journeys aboard “private varnish” and the vintage cars in August 2009 over routes throughout the United States.

SOURCE: WWW.JOURNEYSBYRAIL.COM

NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE



 There is a new reason to visit the Biltmore House in Asheville, N.C. After spending years researching and sourcing materials from around the globe, the Biltmore has authentically restored and opened four bedrooms that have been closed to visitors for nearly 100 years.


SOURCE: TRAVEL MONITOR

ALL HOTELS

 Kayak.com has launched Travel Post.com, a hotel information site that presents hotel reviews, content and rates on more than 140,000 hotels from over 200 travel sites in one easy-to-use display. Content includes detailed descriptions, photos, maps and reviews from travelers and professionals.

SOURCE: BREAKING TRAVEL NEWS

NO FOOLIN'

 Log onto SmarterTravel.com, a comprehensive travel advice resource for the budget-conscious traveler, and discover this year's top vacation destinations for off-peak and bargain travel. Find surprising deals to places like Europe, Hawaii and Lake Tahoe.

SOURCE: TRIPADVISOR




Wheels on Demand

In many U.S. metropolitan areas, Connected by Hertz offers car sharing with 180 free miles per day and free gas for \$8.50–\$10 per hour. Insurance, roadside assistance, maintenance and cleaning are all among the benefits included. What's more, the service is driving onto college campuses beginning with Ohio State University and Pepperdine University.

SOURCE: WSJ.COM

PARADISE WITH PERSONALITY




 For a list of small and unique inns and guesthouses in the British Virgin Islands, go to www.bviturism.com, then to “Where to stay,” then follow the “Jewels” link to find 31 properties on Tortola, seven on Virgin Gorda, one on Jost Van Dyke, four on Anegada and one on Guana Island guaranteed to shine.

SOURCE: WASHINGTON POST

INSIDER PICK



 Trump International Hotel and Tower is a new 92-story luxury hotel occupying perhaps the best location in Chicago, banking the Chicago River, with mesmerizing views of the skyline and lake. But even if you're not staying there, stop at the second floor bar or the 16th floor restaurant for views through their floor-to-ceiling windows.

SOURCE: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

Going Local

Loews Hotel, which operates hotels and resorts in 16 cities across North America, recently announced its “Adopt-a-Farmer” initiative. The aim is to promote local farming while providing customers with food made from ingredients that are locally-sourced, organic and sustainable.

SOURCE: SPRINGWISE NEWSLETTER



SPARKLING AFFECT

Hot spa retreat Grand Resort Bad Ragaz in Switzerland is injecting a shot of glamour to the standard steam room. Located in the hotel’s newly-refurbished To B. Wellbeing & Spa, the new Swarovski steam room features over 300 individual crystals adorning the walls. These crystals twinkle like white diamonds under softly changing soothing colored lights to create a therapeutic atmosphere.

SOURCE: HOTEL NEWSWIRE

SIGHT FOR GOLF EYES



The appeal of playing golf alongside the Great Pyramid of Cheops outside Cairo, Egypt is obvious. But nothing can prepare you for the awe-inspiring sight of a 40-story pyramid rising up behind a flag flapping on the green of the Mena House course. (www.oberoimenahouse.com)

SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES

IT'S COMING!

If you’re re-entering the United States — by air, sea or land — after June 1, that’s it, no more extensions; you’ll need the proper papers.

SOURCE: GETYOUHOME.GOV.

THREE FOR TWO

Check out Marriott Rewards’ Three for Two free night offer! Through September 7, 2009, when you redeem points for a three-night stay, the third night of that stay is free. Members who redeem points for a six-night stay will get two nights of that stay for free.

SOURCE: MARRIOTT.COM

CASH BONUS

From April 1 through the end of 2009, Ritz-Carlton hotels in many major cities are offering a bonus to guests who check in for the weekend. Stay two nights and receive a \$50 or \$100 credit toward hotel services such as spa treatments and meals. Stay three nights and that credit doubles to \$100 or \$200.

SOURCE: MAXABLOG.COM

FAMILY FRIENDLY

SixSuitcaseTravel.com helps families of five or six find hotel rooms, travel, and activities that accommodate real traveling families.

SOURCE: HOTEL HOTSHEET

APPEAL ON WHEELS

The latest guest amenity at hip hotels is free bikes for guests. The Ace Hotel in Portland, Oregon features a fleet of Dutch bikes for sightseeing guests while Miami Beach’s Gansevoort South stocks glow-in-the-dark Puma two-wheelers. The James, in Chicago, offers designer Paul Frank cruisers and Westin’s Element chain keeps Trek bikes for guests worried about their carbon impact.

SOURCE: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

ONE MAN’S JUNK...

If you think of the world as a series of fabulous flea markets, displaying each culture’s best bibelots, you will love the massive Rose Bowl flea market on the second Sunday of every month in Pasadena, Calif. More than 2,500 vendors set up before dawn, and it’s a good idea to come super early, if only to allow enough time to peruse the estimated five miles of booths.

SOURCE: MSNBC

WISH YOU WERE HERE



Now you can roll out your own travel postcards. At HazelMail, named for its founder’s mom, you can upload your photographs and then enter a message and an address. The website takes care of the rest, printing out and mailing a freshly minted postcard. The flat fee of \$1.50 includes postage to anywhere (hazemail.com).

SOURCE: BUDGET TRAVEL

LOOKING FOR ADVENTURE?

Book the full day 16-mile Taos Box rafting trip with Los Rios River Runners in Taos, N.M. You’ll power through Class 4 white water in an 800-foot-deep basalt chasm and beneath the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge (the third highest in the country).

SOURCE: TRAVEL + LEISURE MAGAZINE