



# The Alliance

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# Bulletin

Providing key information in a no-frills format for professionals who travel to write, edit, broadcast or create images.

May 2015

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

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## The Alliance press card



**The International Travel Writers Alliance Press Card now** provides Alliance journalists with formal recognition of their status and standing in the profession and a range of opportunities from Alliance travel partners.

Contact Ashley Gibbins at [Ashley@itwalliance.com](mailto:Ashley@itwalliance.com).

## Job shop

**The International Travel Writers Alliance Job Shop** has been created to enable the Alliance's partners to place - and journalists to receive - information on in-house jobs, special assignments or one-off projects.

### Addition services through Job shop

The Alliance's travel journalists can also :

- create an anonymous job seeker profile or upload a CV for potential employers to search through
- set up **Job Alerts** so as to be notified if a job is posted that matches the journalists skills or interests, and
- access job searching tools and tips

Visit : [www.jobtarget.com/home/home.cfm?site\\_id=14773](http://www.jobtarget.com/home/home.cfm?site_id=14773)

## The Alliance Syndication Network

The Alliance has published May 2015 issue of the *Alliance Syndication Network* directory, which will also be archived at [www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com) : *Networking*

The *Syndication Network* enables Alliance journalists to syndicate their online features (or links to these features) through the other members in the *Network*.

By working together in this way, *Syndication Network* members can achieve a far higher circulation for their features and increase the willingness of travel industry representatives to work with these journalists (knowing they will be able to 'deliver' a far greater potential readership reach).

To become an *Alliance Syndication Network* member email [Ashley@itwalliance.com](mailto:Ashley@itwalliance.com) with :

- the name of your online publication
- a brief description of it
- the circulation or reach (if known)
- the link to it, and
- the best email for other ASN members to contact you on.

There is no cost for this.

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## Working with the Alliance

**The following travel industry partners and agencies have registered with the Alliance and are keen to work with Alliance travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers.**

**Other Alliance partners and agencies can be found at [www.itwalliance.com](http://www.itwalliance.com).**

### Partners

#### The EUROPARC Federation

The EUROPARC Federation is the network for Europe's natural and cultural heritage.

It works to improve the management of Protected Areas in Europe through international cooperation, exchange of ideas and experience, and by influencing policy.

The Federations' members represent hundreds of responsible authorities and thousands of Protected Areas in 36 countries.

The EUROPARC Federation is dedicated to practical nature conservation and sustainable development of Europe's biodiversity, fostering holistic landscape approaches in its management.

Visit : [www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org). Contact : Anthony Luttmann at [a.luttmann@europarc.org](mailto:a.luttmann@europarc.org).

#### Volcanoes Safaris, Uganda and Rwanda

Volcanoes Safaris specialise in mountain gorilla and chimpanzee safaris to Uganda and Rwanda.

The company is an award winning pioneer in ecotourism, which ensures its safaris respect the culture of local communities, the fragility of the environment and the need to use resources in a sustainable way.

Over the past fifteen years Volcanoes Safaris have been at the forefront of mountain gorilla tourism and is the only safari company to have signed the UN Kinshasa Declaration on Great Apes.

Volcanoes Safaris' collection of luxury lodges are located near the gorilla and chimpanzee parks of Uganda and Rwanda,

Visit : [www.volcanoessafaris.com](http://www.volcanoessafaris.com). Contact : Ros Boycott at [ros@masonrose.com](mailto:ros@masonrose.com).

#### The Maldives

The Maldives consists of 1,190 coral islands clustered in a chain of 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean.

The atolls are scattered along the north-south direction with an area covering roughly 90,000km<sup>2</sup>. However, only 1% of this surface area consist of land.

Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation is the national tourism office of Maldives responsible for carrying out promotional activities to become the most preferred island destination of the world.

Visit : [www.visitmaldives.com/en](http://www.visitmaldives.com/en), Contact Sarah Salord at [sarah@mcluskey.co.uk](mailto:sarah@mcluskey.co.uk).

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## **Saxon Boutique Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa**

Located in the tranquil, tree-lined suburb of Sandhurst, within minutes of Johannesburg's world-class shopping and business hub, the Saxon prides itself on being voted the World's Leading Boutique Hotel since 2001.

As a private or business traveller, let the Saxon treat you to personalised, discreet service and unparalleled South African hospitality.

Visit : [www.saxon.co.za](http://www.saxon.co.za). Contact : Candice Turner at [candicet@saxon.co.za](mailto:candicet@saxon.co.za).

## **New Hampshire Travel and Tourism**

The New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development works with the state's seven travel regions to increase visitation, travel and visitor expenditures in order to expand business activity and employment throughout the state.

Visit : [www.visitnh.gov](http://www.visitnh.gov). Contact : Tai Freligh at [tai.freligh@dred.state.nh.us](mailto:tai.freligh@dred.state.nh.us)

## **The Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania**

The Pocono Mountains region is 2,400 square miles of mountains, lakes, rivers, waterfalls and woodlands in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The four-county region offers year round outdoor recreation, seasonal festivals and fairs, lavish spas and fine dining. The Pocono Mountains is two hours from both Philadelphia and New York City.

Visit : [www.800poconos.com](http://www.800poconos.com). Contact : Elizabeth A. Richardson at [Erichardson@poconos.org](mailto:Erichardson@poconos.org).

## **Palm Springs, California**

Palm Springs has long been deemed California's ultimate desert playground.

The destination is an oasis for the visitor looking for a casual, fun-filled vacation offering hiking, architecture, spa museums, natural history.

With over 350 days of sunshine a year and stunning natural beauty, visitors from all over the world are lured to Palm Springs for our storied Hollywood legacy, Native American heritage and stellar collection of mid-century modern architecture.

From boutique hotels to full service hotels to vacation home and condo rentals, Palm Springs offers resort experiences in small, medium or large.

Visit: [www.VisitPalmSprings.com](http://www.VisitPalmSprings.com). Contact: Sarah Hahne, [shahne@visitpalmsprings.com](mailto:shahne@visitpalmsprings.com).

## **News**

### **Antlos, the new yachting website**

Antlos is a new yachting website that connects professional skippers with travellers who enjoy the sea and the thought of sailing but, due to lack of experience or cost, have yet to do so.

The site offers information on a wide range of destinations and skippers and provides a direct contact between hosts and users.

Every skipper on the site publishes their own information and can be contacted direct by registered users.

Guests can choose from different destinations, experiences and activities.

Visit : [www.antlos.com](http://www.antlos.com). Contact : Ieva Strupule at [ieva.strupule@antlos.com](mailto:ieva.strupule@antlos.com).

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## Wynyard Hall country, Durham UK

An historic walled garden, in the grounds of the Wynyard Hall Hotel is to be opened to the public, as part of a £5.3m investment, from 4 August 2015.

The walled garden, which was first established by the Hall's owners, the Marquises of Londonderry, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contains more than 3,000 roses.

It has been designed and planted by Royal Horticultural Society landscape architect Alistair Baldwin. The £1.6m Walled Garden development, to the north of the Hall itself will also house a visitor centre, shop and café.

Set within 150 acres of historical landscaped parkland, Wynyard Hall country house hotel is located on the edge of Durham in the Tees Valley.

Its two AA rosette restaurant, *The Wellington*, offers a menu of modern British dishes created with local ingredients.

Wynyard Hall is conveniently located for the UK north's most popular and historic attractions including Durham Cathedral.

Visit : [www.wynyardhall.co.uk](http://www.wynyardhall.co.uk). Contact : Emma Walker at [emma@sortedpr.com](mailto:emma@sortedpr.com).

## Arundel Castle Siege, Sussex UK

23-25 May 2015

All IWTA members welcome – email [arundel@midnight.co.uk](mailto:arundel@midnight.co.uk) to arrange a press pass

Arundel Castle in West Sussex will play host to a dramatic siege over the May Bank Holiday.

Three prominent living history groups Raven Tor, the Wessex Medieval Alliance and The Company of St. Barbara will reenact a battle where Edward IV is King of England and the French are trying to overtake the heart of Sussex.

Arundel Castle International Joust & Medieval Tournament  
21-26 July 2015

Arundel Castle is to host one of the most authentic and thrilling international jousting competitions in the country.

The week-long event, held in the shadow of the Castle, is the largest of its kind in England and has attracted professional opponents from across the world to compete, creating a thrilling live action spectacle for Castle visitors.

Alliance members are invited to apply for a press pass to this event at [arundel@midnight.co.uk](mailto:arundel@midnight.co.uk).

Arundel Castle & Gardens

Located high on a hill in West Sussex, this great Castle commands the landscape with views across the South Downs and the River Arun.

Founded at the end of the 11th Century, it has been the family home of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors for nearly 1000 years.

Visit : [www.arundelcastle.org](http://www.arundelcastle.org). Contact : Flo Powell at [flo@midnight.co.uk](mailto:flo@midnight.co.uk). [www.arundelcastle.org](http://www.arundelcastle.org)

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## Anantara Tozeur Resort, Tunisia and Morocco

The Minor Hotel Group (MHG), is to develop two new Anantara resorts in North Africa, to open in 2017.

### The Anantara Tozeur Resort

The Anantara Tozeur Resort will be a new luxury escape in the city of Tozeur in the southwest of Tunisia.

Tozeur is a hub of Tunisia's Saharan tourism and easily accessible from the international airport, or by road or rail. An oasis city, it is known for its architecture and vast palm tree fields and is well known on the tourist trail for being the home of the original Star Wars film set.

### Anantara Al Houara Tangier Resort

The Anantara Al Houara Tangier Resort in northern Morocco, will be part of the extensive Al Houara project along 2.5km of beach front overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

It will include a signature 18-hole golf course with golf club and residential homes for sale.

Tangier is currently experiencing significant development, including tourism projects, a new business district, a new airport terminal, a sports stadium and the new Tangier-Med port.

### The Minor Hotel Group

The Minor Hotel Group has a portfolio of 126 hotels and resorts in 22 countries across Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Europe, South America, Africa and the Indian Ocean.

It operates under the Anantara, AVANI, Per AQUUM, Oaks, Tivoli, Elewana, Marriott, Four Seasons, St. Regis and Minor International brands

Visit : [www.minorinternational.com](http://www.minorinternational.com). Contact : Lallie Fraser at [lallie@grifcopr.com](mailto:lallie@grifcopr.com).

## Peru: The Cookbook

Peru: The Cookbook will be published on 1 June by Phaidon Press and is the latest addition to the company's national cuisine series.

The book includes over 500 authentic recipes that reflect the rich culture and cuisine of the country and has been put together by chef and national celebrity, Gastón Acurio.

Considered to be the "Jamie Oliver of the Andes," Acurio is known for promoting Peruvian cuisine around the world and his mission to use food to create social change through the culinary school he set up in a poor area of Lima.

Visit : [www.phaidon.com](http://www.phaidon.com). Contact : Fiona Smith at [fsmith@phaidon.com](mailto:fsmith@phaidon.com).

## The Southampton Heritage Experience, UK

The Southampton Heritage Experience, a new partnership of heritage venues, has been set up to promote the City's heritage

Partners include Solent Sky, SeaCity and Tudor House, SS Shieldhall, The Hythe Ferry, The Mayflower 400 Project and See Southampton.

When visitors purchase a full priced ticket for any of the venues in the partnership they will be offered a discount card containing reduced price entry and offers to the other partners.

Visit : [www.discoversouthampton.co.uk](http://www.discoversouthampton.co.uk). Contact : Nigel Philpott at [nigelphilpott@aol.com](mailto:nigelphilpott@aol.com).

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## One Ocean Expeditions : Antarctic

One Ocean Expeditions, is looking to make cruising in South Georgia, the Falkland Islands and Antarctica more accessible with the introduction of new charter flights from Punta Arenas, Chile to Port Stanley, Falklands Islands.

The flights will eliminate the need to cross the Drake Passage saving over 48 hours.

Four new cruise itineraries, with departures from October 2015 through to March 2016, are on offer on the One Ocean Voyager/Akademik Sergey Vavilov.

One Ocean Expeditions is a Canadian cruise operator that operates two ships, Akademik Ioffe/One Ocean Navigator and Akademik Sergey Vavilov/One Ocean Voyager.

The company offers a range of special programmes in the Arctic and Antarctica with the research vessels designed for polar exploration and modern comforts.

Visit : [www.oneoceanexpeditions.com](http://www.oneoceanexpeditions.com). Contact : Debra Taylor at [debra@toucanmoon.com](mailto:debra@toucanmoon.com).

## Hotels in Zurich go digital

In an initiative between Zurich Tourism and partner hotels, 10,000 rooms will be provided with the digital concierge, a tablet PC that replaces guest directory and allows hotels to easily change the digital content in real time.

For the first time a destination has equipped all of its hotel rooms with a tablet PC.

These are provided for free by Zurich Tourism, the Zurich Hotel Association and the Zurich Casinos.

Hotel guests will be able to book room services and other offers, including spa and wellness treatments, via SuitePad and enjoy news services like digital newspapers, online video newscasts and music streaming

Visit : [www.suitepad.de/en](http://www.suitepad.de/en) and [www.zuerich.com](http://www.zuerich.com). Contact : [media@zuerich.com](mailto:media@zuerich.com).

## Step Out, Experience Macau's Communities

The Macau Government Tourist Office (MGTO) has added four new routes to its "Step Out, Experience Macau's Communities" walking tours, to encourage visitors to explore Macau's lesser-known districts.

The short and easy-to-follow routes offer visitors a glimpse into local life and take in hidden gardens, magical temples and Chinese and Portuguese architecture and monuments.

The new routes join four existing tours, which have been redesigned, and together cover all corners of the total 11 square miles of Macau, which is made up of the Macau Peninsula and the islands of Taipa and Coloane.

All eight route maps are available to download via mobile apps for Android and iOS devices and can be viewed on [www.macautourism.gov.mo](http://www.macautourism.gov.mo).

Visit : [www.en.macautourism.gov.mo](http://www.en.macautourism.gov.mo). Contact: Enrique Martin at [enrique@humewhitehead.co.uk](mailto:enrique@humewhitehead.co.uk).

## AQUAE VENICE 2015

May to October 2015

AQUAE VENICE 2015 is an international exhibition dedicated to the water that will take place in a 14,000 square meter space designed by the architect Michele De Lucchi. Moreover.

Visit : [www.aquae2015.org](http://www.aquae2015.org). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it)

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## The Universal Exposition, the Milan Expo 2015

1 May to 31 October 2015

Milan will host the Universal Exposition, with the theme "Feeding the Planet - Energy for Life".

The pavilions of over 130 countries, corporates and international organizations will gather on a one million square meter site along the axis of Rho-Fiera and Malpensa.

During its six-months, more than 20 million visitors will visit the World Exposition and attend a wide range of cultural shows and concerts.

When over, the Expo site will become a Smart city - a district where technology and energy are used in a clever and sustainable way.

Visit : [www.expo2015.org](http://www.expo2015.org). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

## Leads

### Best of Yukon's Aurora

'Best of Yukon's Aurora' is a new seven day journey to the Northern Lights with 3 nights at the Northern Lights Resort & Spa in Whitehorse, 2 nights at the Aurora Inn in Dawson City and a last night in Whitehorse again.

The package will give guests the best chance to see the elusive Aurora in two prime locations.

Visit : [www.northernlightsyukon.com/packages/best-of-yukons-aurora](http://www.northernlightsyukon.com/packages/best-of-yukons-aurora). Contact : Lisa Chamberlain at [Lisa.chamberlain@btinternet.com](mailto:Lisa.chamberlain@btinternet.com).

### Lithuania

Lithuania saw strong growth in inbound tourism in 2014 with visitors attracted to a culture rich in history and art, the rolling hills of the national parks and UNESCO sites such as the Curonian Spit and Vilnius Old Town.

Lithuania's recent move to join the Eurozone should help the tourism industry as it is easier to implement electronic payments and transactions in the country.

The move is the final stage in Lithuania's bid to become a fully-fledged European nation, coinciding with the 25th anniversary of Lithuania's independence.

Visit : [www.Lithuania.travel](http://www.Lithuania.travel). Contact : Maddy Phillips at [maddy@representationplus.co.uk](mailto:maddy@representationplus.co.uk).

### The Mercer Museum, Doylestown, Pennsylvania, USA

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier tourist attractions, offers visitors an insight into pre-Industrial America as seen through the implements used in everyday life.

The Museum's collection includes more than 40,000 objects exhibiting the tools of more than 60 different crafts and trades. In doing so, it provides one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of material culture in America.

Visit : [www.mercermuseum.org](http://www.mercermuseum.org). Contact : Gayle Shupack at [gshupack@mercermuseum.org](mailto:gshupack@mercermuseum.org).

### The National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham, UK

The National SEA LIFE Centre Birmingham houses over 2,000 creatures, such as sharks, as well as a rescued Giant Green Sea Turtle, otters, jellyfish, piranha, octopus and rays.

Visit : [www.SEALIFE.co.uk/birmingham](http://www.SEALIFE.co.uk/birmingham). Contact : Michelle Ivins at [michelleivins@gough.co.uk](mailto:michelleivins@gough.co.uk).



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## Virgin Holidays US

Virgin Holidays is expanding its US product offering with breaks to Branson, Missouri.

Set deep in the Ozark Mountains, the city of Branson has been a favourite of tourists in the Missouri area and surrounding US States for generations.

For the laid-back entertainment buffs there are a number of theatres and the Hollywood Wax Museum as well as beautiful wineries.

For the more adventurous thrill-seekers there are more than enough activities on offer to really get that adrenaline pumping with cave-tours, go-karting and horseback riding.

Visit [www.virginholidays.co.uk/branson-missouri](http://www.virginholidays.co.uk/branson-missouri). Contact : Natalie Wilson at [natalie.wilson@virginholidays.com](mailto:natalie.wilson@virginholidays.com).

## Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn, Belize - Eco-hunting

Francis Ford Coppola's Turtle Inn, which is located in the coastal village of Placencia, has launched a scuba diving experience where guests can dive the reef while hunting for lionfish, an invasive species.

Lionfish are known for their striking appearance in the Caribbean Sea, their delicious taste - and for their attempts to destruct the barrier reef.

There have been a reported 68 different invading marine species found throughout Florida, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico over the last century, but none have wreaked as much havoc on the marine environment as the voracious red lionfish.

As the fish do not belong in these waters, they have no known predators and there is nothing to stop them from consuming all Caribbean reef fish.

Visit : [www.coppolaresorts.com/turtleinn/explore/activities/scuba-diving](http://www.coppolaresorts.com/turtleinn/explore/activities/scuba-diving).

Journey Latin America specialises in tailor-made travel and small group tours to all of Latin America, including Belize.

Visit : [www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk](http://www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk). Contact : Kate Bell at [Kate.bell@purplepr.com](mailto:Kate.bell@purplepr.com).

## The Hound of The Baskervilles Tour, Devon UK

Orestone Manor and Unique Devon Tours have launched their Hound Of The Baskervilles Tour, which is given by Alex Graeme, a direct descendant of the man who helped give the original Dartmoor locations for this Sherlock Holmes tale.

Alex's great grandfather, Robert Duins Cooke, was a local vicar and expert on Dartmoor and presented Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with the exact locations on the Moors to visit when Doyle was researching the story.

As a result, the Graeme family have a first edition of the novel.

### Orestone Manor

Orestone Manor is an independent classic country house hotel, run by the Graeme family, and located in the coastal village of Maidencombe, and close to the the 'English Riviera' resorts of Teignmouth and Torquay, South Devon.

Visit : [www.orestonemanor.com](http://www.orestonemanor.com) and [www.englishriviera.co.uk](http://www.englishriviera.co.uk). Contact : James at [James@southwestpr.co.uk](mailto:James@southwestpr.co.uk).

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### **Skiathos Princess Hotel & Aegean Suites, Skiathos, Greece**

Skiathos Princess Hotel & Aegean Suites have opened for the 2015 season with the introduction of Juliette Armand and Moroccan Oil Spa Products & Treatments.

Located on the island of Skiathos, Greece, Aegean Suites is an adult-only all-suite hotel, set on a hillside just outside Skiathos town.

A short distance away, sister property Skiathos Princess Hotel overlooks a sandy beach at Agia Paraskevi.

Visit : [www.skiathosprincess.com](http://www.skiathosprincess.com). Contact : Alexandra Delf at [alexandra@ophirpr.co.uk](mailto:alexandra@ophirpr.co.uk).

### **Trinity House, London**

Trinity House, the working home of the General Lighthouse Authority, is located opposite the Tower of London on Tower Hill.

The House has teamed up with powerboat charter company Solent Rib Charter to offer a 'Thames Rib Blast' on the River.

The Ribs can accommodate up to eight guests per boat and while the duration of the ride is flexible, most opt for a two-hour 'Blast' through Central London and/or to the Thames Barrier and back.

Participants then return to the House for a champagne lunch.

Visit : [www.trinityhouse.co.uk/events](http://www.trinityhouse.co.uk/events). Contact : Karen Luard at [kp@kpcommunications.co.uk](mailto:kp@kpcommunications.co.uk).

### **Summer in Stockholm**

Summer in the Swedish capital Stockholm sees camellias and cherry trees are in full bloom and the city's 23,000 islands and surrounding lakes become an attraction for residents and visitors alike.

A range of culture inspired activities help bring the city to life led by the Midsummer Festival (around 20th June) and the Stockholm Jazz Festival (July).

#### **Ett Hem**

Situated in Stockholm's smart embassy quarter of Ostermalm in Skoldungagatan, Ett Hem is a 12-room boutique hotel, a 10 minute walk from the centre.

It is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World and winner of the Andrew Harper Grand Award in 2013.

For Ett Hem visit : [www.etthem.se](http://www.etthem.se). Contact : Matilda Coles at [Matilda@masonrose.com](mailto:Matilda@masonrose.com).

For Stockholm visit : [www.visitstockholm.com](http://www.visitstockholm.com). Contact : Ann-Charlotte Jonsson at [ann-charlotte.jonsson@stockholm.se](mailto:ann-charlotte.jonsson@stockholm.se).

### **New Egyptian Museum, Turin, Italy**

The new Egyptian Museum in Turin, which has opened, is second only in importance to that of Cairo.

Visit : [www.museoegizio.it](http://www.museoegizio.it). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

## Quinta do Lago, Portugal

Quinta do Lago in Portugal is offering amateur golfers the chance to learn how to play like a tour professional after launching a range of intensive new golf tuition breaks.

The resort's one-day short game masterclasses offer expert advice, tuition and video assessment – including SAM PuttLab and pitching launch monitor analysis – on areas including wedge and bunker play, chipping and putting to help eliminate any problems near the putting surface.

The official winter training base of England Golf for the next four years, Quinta do Lago's practice facilities are matched by three championship courses.

The hotel is located among 2,000 acres of the Ria Formosa Natural Park.

Visit : [www.quintadolago.com](http://www.quintadolago.com). Daniel Chidley at [daniel@theazaleagroup.com](mailto:daniel@theazaleagroup.com).

## No Man's Fort, the Solent UK

No Man's Fort; a man-made island in the Solent, has opened and is now taking bookings for day trips guests and overnight stays.

It is the second of three forts owned by AmaZing Venues.

No Man's Fort lunch experiences start from just £99 per person for four courses and includes return boat transfers from Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth.

Delicacies which are often served as part of the set menu include mackerel caught right off the side of the fort.

Built between 1867 and 1880 to protect Portsmouth from Napoleon III, No Man's Fort is the larger sister venue to Spitbank Fort which opened in 2012.

Visit : [www.amazingvenues.co.uk](http://www.amazingvenues.co.uk). Contact : Rebecca Peters at [amazingvenues@brightergroup.com](mailto:amazingvenues@brightergroup.com).

## What's on

### Giro d'Italia

9 to 31 May

Italy's major bike race, which dates back to 1909, starts on 9 May 2015 in San Lorenzo al Mare in Liguria and ends in Milan on 31 May 2015.

Visit : [www.gazzetta.it](http://www.gazzetta.it). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

### Mille Miglia

14 to 17 May 2015

Some of the most stunning vintage cars in the world are chosen to participate in this annual race.

The 2015 route departs from Brescia and goes through Lake Garda, Padua, Ferrara, Republic of San Marino, Ascoli Piceno to Rome and then back to Brescia via Siena, Pisa, Parma, and Bergamo.

Visit : [www.1000miglia.eu](http://www.1000miglia.eu). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

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### **Sedan Medieval Festival, France**

16 and 17 May 2015

Now in its 20th year, the annual Sedan Medieval Festival is one of the French Ardenne's premier events.

Built in 1424 by the Earl of La Mark, the Château Fort de Sedan is known for being one of the largest and most impressive structures in Europe.

During the Festival, tens of thousands of visitors to Sedan Fort will be able to experience a feel of the middle ages - with highlights including the great parade on Saturday evening.

The traditional torchlight procession to the fortress on Saturday evening - involving more than 300 knights, courtiers, musicians, and performers - will start with a city parade, followed by a concert in the moat and grand fireworks display.

The Ardennes is located in northern Europe, and Sedan itself has been at the centre of some of Europe's biggest conflicts, including the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, the First World War, and the Second World War.

Much of that landscape can be explored using the 140 kilometres-long Fortifications Route - one of six well-marked car trails which loop and snake their way around the fascinating Ardennes countryside.

Visit : [www.chateaufort-sedan.fr/en/](http://www.chateaufort-sedan.fr/en/). Contact : Djamila Daoud at [daoud@ardennes.com](mailto:daoud@ardennes.com).

### **Norwich City of Ale**

21 to 31st May 2015

The annual City of Ale festival, which is back for its fifth year, is a ten day celebration that brings together over 44 public houses and 39 breweries.

The festival programme will include ale trails, pub quizzes and live music and events and the chance to taste a large number of speciality beers.

The event is funded by Norwich Business Improvement District (BID) as one of the ways to attract more visitors to the city.

Visit : [www.cityofale.org.uk](http://www.cityofale.org.uk). Contact : Kate Morfoot at [kate@junglepr.com](mailto:kate@junglepr.com).

### **The Classic Car & Transport Show, Ragley Hall, Warwickshire UK**

24 and 25 May 2015

The annual *Classic Car & Transport Show* will see over 600 vintage, classic, American, kit and custom cars as well as motorcycles and commercial vehicles on display.

Several car clubs will be in attendance including the Metropolitan Owners, Yesterdays Touring Period Caravans and AC Owners National Event.

Ragley Hall is the family home to the Marquess & Marchioness of Hertford and its stunning gardens will also be open to visitors.

Visit : [www.transtarpromotions.com](http://www.transtarpromotions.com) and [www.ragley.co.uk](http://www.ragley.co.uk). Contact : Tanya Aspinwall at [Tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk](mailto:Tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk).

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## Two medieval festivals in June in Italy

### **Giostra Dell'Archidado, Cortona, Italy**

14 June 2015

The Archidado Joust dates back to the Middle Ages and was officially created in 1397 to celebrate the wedding of Francesco Casali, the Lord of Cortona, and Antonia Salimbeni, a noble woman from Siena.

In the city of Cortona, this event is celebrated every year on the second Sunday of June, when the streets are decorated in medieval style and residents dress as knights and their ladies; flag flyers, crossbow shooters, soldiers and pages.

Visit : [www.giostraarchidado.com](http://www.giostraarchidado.com). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

### **Palio del Niballo, Faenza, Emilia Romagna**

28 June 2015

The Palio del Niballo recreates a day in 14th-century Faenza, with flag-wavers, knights, and drummers dressed in the colours of the town's five contending "rioni" (i.e. quarters) - White, Yellow, Black, Red and Green.

The palio consists of horseback riders hitting a revolving dummy, depicting a Saracen warrior (called the "Niballo"), with a spear.

During June, the rioni warm up with flag-waving and music competitions and the Bigorda d'Oro (a palio for younger racers).

Visit : [www.paliodifaenza.it](http://www.paliodifaenza.it). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it)

## Prosecco's Spring in Treviso, Italy

to June 2015

This annual event in Treviso, Valdobbiadene, Conegliano and Cartizze - the heart of the Prosecco wine region - bring together shows, exhibitions, and visits to historic villas.

All are geared to taking visitors on a 'journey of discovery' through all aspects of wine production process.

Special packages include stay in hotels, agriturismi and B&Bs in the area along with dining in local restaurants and visit to wineries.

Visit : [www.primaveraprosecco.it](http://www.primaveraprosecco.it). Contact : Stefania Gatta at [stefania.gatta@enit.it](mailto:stefania.gatta@enit.it).

## The International Folk Art Market, Santa Fe, New Mexico

10 to 12 July 2015

The International Folk Art Market, the largest of its kind in the world, will bring together 150 folk artists from 57 countries.

Now in its 12th year, the Market showcases the best in cultural art and attracts close to 20,000 market-goers over the course of three days.

The broad range of mediums include beadwork, carvings, ceramics, musical instruments, glass, jewelry, metalwork, mixed media, paintings, sculpture, and exquisite textiles.

Visit : [www.folkartalliance.org](http://www.folkartalliance.org). Contact : Clare at [clare@clarehertelcommunications.com](mailto:clare@clarehertelcommunications.com).

## The Annual World of Faeries Festival, South Elgin, Illinois

1 and 2 August 2015

The World of Faeries Festival is one of the USA's biggest arts and crafts and themed events, which showcases the best local musical talent and entertainment from the surrounding states.

Visit : [www.theworldoffaeries.com](http://www.theworldoffaeries.com). Contact: Gloria Yaeger at [dayglo@theworldoffaeries.com](mailto:dayglo@theworldoffaeries.com).

## The Curaçao North Sea Jazz

4 and 5 September 2015

The sixth edition of the Curaçao North Sea Jazz Festival will see performances by Enrique Iglesias, the Isley Brothers, Lionel Richie, Gregory Porter, Cassandra Wilson, Charles Bradley, Bettye LaVette and Randy Newman.

Visit : [www.curacaonorthseajazz.com](http://www.curacaonorthseajazz.com). Contact : [info@curacaonorthseajazz.com](mailto:info@curacaonorthseajazz.com).

## Annual Boston Local Food Festival

20 September 2015

The Boston Local Food Festival - New England's Largest one-day farmers market and celebration of local food gives visitors the chance to learn about the benefits of sustainably grown and produced food.

This free outdoor event features local restaurants, farms, fishers, specialty food producers, food trucks, and food and fitness-related organizations.

Visit : [www.bostonlocalfoodfestival.org](http://www.bostonlocalfoodfestival.org). Contact : Nicola A. Williams at [nicola@thewilliamsagency.net](mailto:nicola@thewilliamsagency.net).

## Reasons to write about

### Summer cycling in Alta Badia, the Dolomites, Italy

Alta Badia, which is a ski resort in the South Tyrolean Dolomites of Northern Italy, attracts cyclists during the summer months.

Cycling is a fine way to explore the beauty of the mountain landscape in this UNESCO World Heritage site

The Alta Badia Tourism Board's summer cycling campaign is called Bike Friendly, and is aimed at both road and mountain biking.

There are maps indicating recommended itineraries, and through a cooperation with the specialised Dolomite Biking school individual and group excursions are organised on a daily basis.

Visit : [www.dolomitebiking.com](http://www.dolomitebiking.com)

### Bike events

#### The Sellaronda Bike Day

Sunday 21 June 2015 and Sunday 13 September 2015

The Sellaronda Bike Day, a non-competitive cycling event open to professionals and non-professionals has a route around the Sella Range.

Visit : [www.sellarondabikeday.com](http://www.sellarondabikeday.com)

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## **The Maratona dles Dolomites-Enel**

Sunday 5 July 2015

The Maratona dles Dolomites-Enel, which is the highest profile summer event in Alta Badia, starts from La Villa and finishes at Corvara.

There are three routes:

- the full "Maratona", 138 km long and with a total altitude difference of 4230 metres
- the "Medium" distance, 106 km long and with an altitude difference of 3130 metres, and
- the "Sellaronda" route, 55 km long and with an altitude difference of 1780 metres.

Visit : [www.maratona.it](http://www.maratona.it).

Visit : [www.altabadia.org/bike](http://www.altabadia.org/bike). Contact : Stefanie Irsara at [stefanie.irsara@altabadia.org](mailto:stefanie.irsara@altabadia.org).

## **Alcatraz Cruises, San Francisco**

Alcatraz Cruises offers visitors to San Francisco the Alcatraz Island and Angel Island Combination Tour.

### **Alcatraz**

Alcatraz was once a world-famous federal penitentiary, but the island's history before and after the penitentiary era is less well known. It was the site of the first American lighthouse on the West Coast and the island also served as a huge harbor defense fort during the Civil War.

After the fort became obsolete, the U.S. Army turned the island into a military prison.

Following the closing of the penitentiary, Alcatraz became the site of an American Indian protest movement.

Visit : [www.nps.gov/alca](http://www.nps.gov/alca).

### **Angel Island**

Angel Island is known as the "Ellis Island of the West".

Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, immigrants that came to America's West Coast were processed at Angel Island. They were detained for days, sometimes months or years, while waiting to enter the country.

The United States Immigration Station on Angel Island is now a newly renovated museum that offers visitors a chance to learn about this important part of U.S. history.

Visit : [www.angelislandsf.com](http://www.angelislandsf.com)

Visit : [www.alcatrazcruises.com](http://www.alcatrazcruises.com). Contact : Molly Blaisdell at [molly@hooklineandthinker.com](mailto:molly@hooklineandthinker.com).

## **The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland**

The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland is a network of national and private railways that highlights the Swiss alpine scenery, by bringing together rail routes and mountain excursions with options that can be enjoyed year round.

The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland can be started from any point with no prescribed direction or duration.

To capture the best of Switzerland's railway journeys, Alpenwild, an American tour company with over 30 years of experience in the Alps, leads guests on a 9-day rail tour of Switzerland named Scenic Alps by Rail.

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## Scenic Alps by Rail

This Grand Train Tour of Switzerland includes stays in Lugano, St. Moritz, Zermatt, Montreux and Interlaken.

Most of Switzerland's panoramic trains and mountain railways have operated for over 100 years. Some are among the best-known and most widely-celebrated in the world, while others are remote and off the beaten path.

### Glacier Express

The world's slowest express train offers a 7½-hour daily journey from St. Moritz to Zermatt, travelling through glamorous resorts, charming valleys, 91 tunnels and across 291 bridges.

The red-and-white carriages snake their way through the Rhine Gorge and over the Oberalp Pass.

### Bernina Express

The Bernina Express has UNESCO World Heritage status for its stunning scenery like the Morteratsch Glacier, Schyn Gorge, and Brusio spiral viaduct.

It connects the cool north to the warm south of Switzerland with an extension that links passengers to Lake Como and the Mediterranean climate of Lugano.

### GoldenPass Line

On an east-west route from Lake Lucerne to Montreux on Lake Geneva, the GoldenPass Line climbs the Brunig Pass and skirts the lakes of both Brienz and Thun.

The GoldenPass Line also offers a variety of innovative rolling stock, from carriages with rotating seats and panoramic windows to classic Belle Époque coaches with luxurious velour furniture.

### Jungfrau Railway

When the Jungfrau Railway was completed in 1912 it embodied the ultimate achievement in railway construction.

It's still a spectacular excursion and a pinnacle of any trip to the Alps.

Travellers can start from Interlaken, Grindelwald, or Lauterbrunnen.

### Gornergrat Railway

Linking the mountain resort of Zermatt with the 10,285-ft summit of the Gorner Ridge, this cogwheel railway offers continually stunning views of the Matterhorn and then arrives at the ridgetop observatory, which overlooks the Gorner Glacier (the second longest in the Alps).

Visit : [www.alpenwild.com/trip/details/scenic-alps-by-rail](http://www.alpenwild.com/trip/details/scenic-alps-by-rail). Contact : Greg Witt at [info@alpenwild.com](mailto:info@alpenwild.com).

## GVI's Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica

GVI's Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica has made it into National Geographic Traveler's "50 Tours of a Lifetime".

The project includes volunteering on a local community project, lending assistance to schools, exploring the beauty of Central America and brushing up on Spanish.

The Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica programme joins 49 other global travel experiences, which have been selected by a panel of editors as the world's best guided tours.



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## Two to 24 week projects

The two to 24 week voluntourism project immerses volunteers in rich Costa Rican culture, enables them to assist on valuable community projects and indulge in their sense of adventure.

Volunteers taking part in this rewarding and immersive project travel to Costa Rica's stunning Pacific Coast to join the community in Quepos, a short bus ride from the famous Manuel Antonio National Park and beach.

On arrival, they live and work with the local community, lending assistance to the schools, where there is a shortage of teachers, organising and introducing workshops, games and sport activities, combined with the chance to explore Costa Rica.

Visit : [www.gvi.co.uk/programs/volunteer-children-costa-rica](http://www.gvi.co.uk/programs/volunteer-children-costa-rica). Contact : Joanna Cadbury at [Joanna@grifcopr.com](mailto:Joanna@grifcopr.com).

## Dubrovnik –'city of festivals'

The Dubrovnik Tourist Board, which promotes Dubrovnik as a 'city of festivals' has unveiled the 2015 Dubrovnik Summer Festival and Midsummer Scene Festival programme.

Both festivals are a collaboration between *creativeCroatia* and the Croatian Embassy in London, who are hosting events in London throughout May and June to celebrate Croatia's cultural calendar.

### The 66th Dubrovnik Summer Festival

The 66th Dubrovnik Summer Festival will run from 10 July to 25 August 2015, featuring more than 2,000 artists and over 70 plays, classical concerts, films and folklore performances in 15 open-air venues across the city.

### The Midsummer Scene Festival

The Midsummer Scene Festival, now in its second year runs from 20 June to 4 July 2015, with Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* including performances from the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra.

The festivals allow visitors to watch performances in surroundings such as Fort Lovrijenac, St Blaise's Church and Lokrum Island.

### Other festivals in the city include :

- **The Aklapela Festival**, which celebrates the traditional type of klapa (a capella) singing, take place in April at several locations in the Old Town. The festival. Concerts are free.
- **Ana in The City** is a yearly festival involving famous Croatian cellist Ana Rucner, which takes place around Midsummer's Day, with a very early morning concert given on Mount Srd, above Dubrovnik.
- **Dubrovnik in Late Summer** is a classical musical festival that eases the town into September.
- **The Dubrovnik International Wine and Jazz Festival** – combining those two elements rather deliciously! – should take place at the end of September 2015.

Visit : [www.dubrovnikwinejazz.com](http://www.dubrovnikwinejazz.com).

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## Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik is an ancient town on Croatia's Adriatic coast and the centre of Dubrovnik-Neretva County with its Old Town is UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Visit : [www.dubrovnik-festival.hr](http://www.dubrovnik-festival.hr), [www.midsummer-scene.com](http://www.midsummer-scene.com) and [www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng](http://www.tzdubrovnik.hr/eng). Contact : Tim Thackray at [TeamCroatia@rooster.co.uk](mailto:TeamCroatia@rooster.co.uk).

## Camino Coastal Routes

Santiago de Compostela was proclaimed the first European Cultural itinerary by the Council of Europe in 1987.

This route from the French-Spanish border was and is taken by pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela. Some 1,800 buildings along the route, both religious and secular, are of historic interest.

The route played a fundamental role in encouraging cultural exchanges between the Iberian peninsula and the rest of Europe during the Middle Ages. Thousands of pilgrims walk or cycle the Camino de Santiago each year.

While the majority of pilgrims choose to follow the French Way or Camino Francés - the most famous Camino route - there are many other Camino routes in France, Portugal and Spain, many of them taking in the coastal regions.

CaminoWays.com have selected the top three coastal routes:

### Portugal's Coastal Camino to Santiago

Starting in the city of Porto, the Portuguese Coastal Way covers 236km through Northern Portugal into the South of Galicia and Santiago de Compostela.

It is the chance to discover the Atlantic charm of Northern Portugal stay in picturesque fishing villages and walking through natural parks and along beaches.

The entire route should take about two weeks on foot or just one week by bike.

### The Northern Way across 'Green Spain'

The Camino del Norte is a 800km route along the coast of 'Green Spain', starting in the chic city of San Sebastián, known for its many Michelin star restaurants.

From the Basque Country, the route passes through Cantabria and Asturias before reaching Galicia. The entire Northern Way takes 37 days to walk and 18 days to cycle.

### The Finisterre Way

The Finisterre Way is the only route that begins in Santiago de Compostela and takes pilgrims to Cape Fisterra, otherwise known as the 'End of the World', and along the craggy coastlines to Muxía.

It passes through tranquil villages, secluded farmland and untouched landscapes before reaching the sea cliffs of the westernmost point of Spain.

The Finisterre Way can be walked in eight days.

Visit : [info@caminoways.com](mailto:info@caminoways.com). Contact : Maria Golpe at [maria@caminoways.com](mailto:maria@caminoways.com).

## The Murcia Region of Spain

The Murcia region in south-east Spain enjoys a rich heritage with the cities of Cartagena and Murcia itself providing culture and a mixture of Roman, Phoenician and Moorish history .

Cartagena's ancient Roman theatre makes an impressive sight alongside the numerous other archaeological delights in the historic port.

For those holidaymakers who enjoy a walk and sweeping panoramic views, the city also boasts the impressive 11th century Castillo de la Concepción, which sits 70m above sea level.

Cartagena is located in the Costa Cálida , which also contains the Mar Menor – Europe's largest saltwater lagoon with miles of beaches on offer.

The Cartagonova Hotel in Cartagena offers a base to explore the region with the four-star venue situated close to the city's Roman theatre and within a short walk of the impressive Santa Maria de Gracia Church.

The city of Murcia, the region's provincial capital has attractions including the Catedral de Santa María, built in 1394, which has a blend of Gothic and Baroque-style architecture.

Another interesting visit is the Museo Salzillo, which is devoted to Murcian sculptor Francisco Salzillo and houses his “pasos” – figures carried in Easter processions.

The area offers year-round sunshine with an average temperature of 19.4°C and 315 days sun a year.

Located in the south-east of Spain, the Region of Murcia is within the Mediterranean basin and includes 252km of coastline, known as the 'Costa Cálida' or warm coast.

Visitors can take their pick from numerous sandy beaches; a variety of water sports and diving locations; 17 top-quality golf courses; picturesque countryside and regional parks.

The Mar Menor is a saltwater lagoon with warm shallow waters, gentle wind, sheltered coastline and many hotel facilities.

The region with a host of big events and festivals taking place throughout the year including the international music festival 'SOS 4.8' in Murcia at the beginning of May, or the varied summer festivals including 'La Mar de Músicas' in Cartagena or the International Jazz Festival in San Javier, both in July.

Visitors can also enjoy August's 'El Cante de Las Minas Flamenco Festival' in La Unión.

Visit : [www.murciaturistica.es](http://www.murciaturistica.es). Contact : Luke Frary at [luke.Frary@theazaleagroup.com](mailto:luke.Frary@theazaleagroup.com).

## A place to stay

### Stanbrook Abbey, Worcestershire UK

Stanbrook Abbey has introduced 52 luxury bedrooms following a major refurbishment that has taken two years and has included knocking the tiny nun cells into larger bedrooms.

Built in 1625, the abbey is located in 21 acres of Worcestershire countryside with a private lake and orchard.

Visit : [www.amazingvenues.co.uk](http://www.amazingvenues.co.uk). Contact : Grace Christie at [amazingvenues@brightergroup.com](mailto:amazingvenues@brightergroup.com).

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## The Italian Hospitality Collection in Tuscany and Sardinia

The Italian Hospitality Collection comprises four luxury resorts in the Tuscany and Sardinia regions of Italy.

### Chia Laguna Resort, Sardinia

The Chia Laguna Resort is collection of three hotels and private villas located among the turquoise waters and unspoilt Chia Bay in Southern Sardinia.

The resort fronts golden sand dunes set in sheltered bays with 100-year-old junipers and multi-coloured lagoons.

### Fonteverde, Tuscany

Located in the Sienese hills of the Val d'Orcia, Fonteverde is a 5-star 17th century residence, built by Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici, and now 78 rooms and seven therapeutic pools.

Terraces overlook mount Amiata, where guests will spot olives groves, vineyards and streams.

### Bagni di Pisa, Tuscany

The 18th century summer residence of the Grand Duke Francesco Stefano of Lorena, Bagni di Pisa has been restored to its former splendour.

The frescoed hallways, Tuscan terracotta and marbled floors evoke a time when guests included Gustav of Sweden, George IV of England, Mary Shelley and the Cardinal of York.

The hotels Dei Lorena restaurant offers views of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

### Grotta Giusti, Tuscany

This nineteenth-century villa of the poet Giuseppe Giusti, is surrounded by picturesque parks, and close to what he regarded as the "eighth wonder of the world" - the millennial thermal cave.

Now a 64 room hotel, Grotta Giusti has maintained its historical air with marble bathrooms and thermal water on tap.

The Spa is the jewel in the crown with its 750 square metre thermal water open-air pool.

Visit : [www.ihchotels.it](http://www.ihchotels.it). Contact : Charlotte Rous at [Charlotte@grifcopr.com](mailto:Charlotte@grifcopr.com).

## The DUKES Oceana, Dubai hotel

Dubai-based luxury property developer Seven Tides has announced that the DUKES Oceana, Dubai hotel and residences, located on Palm Jumeirah in early 2016.

It will be the first international property for the DUKES Collection brand, whose flagship hotel is DUKES London.

Centrally located on the trunk of Palm Jumeirah it will be 45 minutes from Dubai International Airport.

The 273-room hotel will offer world-class leisure and entertainment facilities including a private beach, indoor pool, and outdoor infinity pool plus state-of-the-art gym, along with a number of restaurants.

Visit : [www.dukesoceana.com](http://www.dukesoceana.com). Contact : Claire Griffin at [Claire@grifcopr.com](mailto:Claire@grifcopr.com).

## Château Rhianfa, Anglesey, Wales

Château Rhianfa in Anglesey has launched a two night break where Welsh lessons can be included in the price.

Part of the AmaZing Venues collection, Château Rhianfa is a Grade II listed building designed in French Loire Valley style.

Overlooking the Menai Strait on Anglesey, the 22 bedroom property is well located for touring the Snowdonia National Park.

Those staying the French Gothic-styled hotel can also take a RIB through the Menai Strait.

Visit : [www.AmaZingVenues.co.uk](http://www.AmaZingVenues.co.uk). Amy Skelding: [amazingvenues@brightergroup.com](mailto:amazingvenues@brightergroup.com).

## Royal Demeure luxury hotels, Italy

The Royal Demeure luxury hotel chain is a collection of historic palazzi in Italy including :

- the Hotel d'Inghilterra, Residenza di Ripetta and the Hotel Beverly Hills, in Rome
- the Hotel Helvetia & Bristol in Florence the Grand Hotel Continental in Siena and,
- the Hotel Villa Michelangelo in Vicenza.

Each hotel has been meticulously refurbished with frescoed halls hosting modern art, marble bathrooms boast hydro-massage bathtubs and cosy restaurants offering traditional Italian cuisine.

Visit : [www.royaldemeure.com](http://www.royaldemeure.com). Contact : Tryphena Greenwood at [Tryphena.Greenwood@brightergroup.com](mailto:Tryphena.Greenwood@brightergroup.com).

## Shambala Private Game Reserve, South Africa

Shambala Private Game Reserve covers 12 000 hectares of natural landscape in South Africa's Limpopo Province and is home to Africa's *Big Five* ( leopard, lion, elephant, black and white rhino, and buffalo).

Among the antelope species there are the endangered sable antelope, black impala and tsessebe, in addition to numerous blesbok, duiker, eland, gemsbok, kudu, nyala and steenbok.

The giraffe, herds of wildebeest and troops of zebra are easily spotted, but you can also expect to see some bush pigs trotting through the bush with their stiff little tails pointing upwards. Amongst the smaller cats there are caracal and large-spotted genet.

Visit : [www.shambalagamereserve.com](http://www.shambalagamereserve.com). Contact : Ros Boycott at [ros@masonrose.com](mailto:ros@masonrose.com).

## The Small Hotels, worldwide

TheSmallHotels.com is a premier online source for boutique hotels in destinations worldwide.

Hip or historic, elegantly contemporary or uniquely themed, from city retreats to castles to sheer luxury to celebrated designer hotels, Boutique's hotels are all unique, in architectural style, sophisticated interior design or decorative theme, and with that special attentive service.

Properties range from boutique hotels, guest houses, villa rental, eco-farms, vineyards homes, historic house hotels

Visit : [www.thesmallhotels.com](http://www.thesmallhotels.com). Contact : Izim Bozada at [info@boutiquesmallhotels.com](mailto:info@boutiquesmallhotels.com).

## An Alliance focus on :

### International hotel star ratings

A recent Hotels4u/YouGov online survey of over 2,000 people has found that ninety-five percent of travellers are familiar with the one to five star rating system.

However, 71 per cent are unaware there is no standard international classification.

The survey also found that access to free wi-fi was the most important amenity of those listed (65%), for UK travellers when booking a hotel.

The list of traveller requirements were :

- Free Wi-Fi : 65%
- English-speaking staff 53%
- Swimming pool 48%
- Guest parking 41%
- 24-hour reception 40%
- A safe in the room 39%
- Laundry services 11%
- Concierge services 9%
- Children's club 7%
- A minibar in the room 7%
- A computer in the room 7%
- Step-free access 6%
- Fresh flowers 4%
- Sewing kit 4%

Star ratings for hotels across the globe can be determined in a variety of ways – by the local government to independent agencies.

There have been attempts to create an internationally recognised and reliable standard, without success, meaning rating criteria changes from country to country.

Hotel rating systems in some main tourist destinations

**Hotels4u have created a breakdown of what 5\* means to eight popular holiday destinations.**

#### Spain

Spain doesn't manage its tourism industry nationally; instead, each region takes responsibility for its own hotel star rating system.

Standards are all regulated by the government tourism authority and all hotels have to offer standard facilities.

#### France

Hotels in France are all rated against the same criteria developed by the public tourist board department that has been enforced by the French Government.

Ratings are based on criteria, such as room size, lobby size, location, amenities and services.

#### Greece

Greece is a member of HOTREC (Hotels, Restaurants & Cafés in Europe).

HOTREC launched the European Hospitality Quality scheme (EHQ) which has since accredited the existing national inspection bodies for hotel rating.

Unlike other countries, the system isn't strict where room size and showering facilities are concerned.

The main criteria focus on quality management, wellness and sleeping accommodation.

There is a catalogue of criteria with 21 qualifications encompassing 270 elements – some mandatory, others optional.

## International hotel star ratings

(cont)

### Great Britain

Great Britain awards star ratings to hotels based on the facilities provided for guests, the quality of the welcome, service and hospitality of the staff, the food and the cleanliness.

These standards are agreed by the AA (Automobile Association) and UK tourist authorities (Visit Britain, Visit Scotland and Visit Wales).

### Italy

It's evident that the Italian government takes the public's ability to trust statements of quality and standards seriously.

In 2009, a new star rating system was established with cleanliness being one of the main aspects on which hotels are judged.

Each star rating has a different cleaning criteria, with one star hotels changing bed sheets at least once a week, and five star being changed daily.

### Turkey

In Turkey, most hotels are registered with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

This means they've been inspected and comply with certain standards depending on the rating they've been given.

Some smaller hotels are registered with the municipal authorities. They also have to fulfil a minimum standards requirement which is set by the local authorities.

### Trusted endorsements

The survey also found that the most trusted endorsement of hotels comes from friends and family (32 per cent), followed by hotel review sites (22 per cent).

This corresponds with the rise in websites offering unbiased holiday reviews, such as Feefo, which has seen an 31 per cent year-on-year increase on Google Trends.

To help travellers using both traditional star ratings and peer-to-peer recommendations, Hotels4u has developed an international star ratings guide.

**Visit : [www.hotels4u.com](http://www.hotels4u.com). Contact : Victoria Whitehead at [Victoria.Whitehead@iprospect.com](mailto:Victoria.Whitehead@iprospect.com).**

### Portugal

Portugal has a compulsory hotel classification system that is regulated by the Tourism of Portugal, under the Ministry of Economy and Innovation.

The star rating is based on the public areas in the hotel, the furniture both in the rooms and common areas, services available and environmental qualities.

As well as the above, information including: a complaints book, price information, health and safety, time and place of breakfast and check out time must all be available at reception.

### Thailand

The Thai Hotel Association (THA) – supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) and the Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) – established a comprehensive and credible universally-recognised hotel standard scheme that rates the qualities and characteristics of hotels.

The main factors taken into consideration in the assessment include: physical aspects, constructional aspects, the standard of maintenance, facilities for guests and quality of service.

Visit : [www.hotels4u.com/blog/news/hotel-stars-mean-around-world/](http://www.hotels4u.com/blog/news/hotel-stars-mean-around-world/) .

## Travel guides

The following travel publishers will provide review copies to Alliance members.

### AA Travel Guides

www.shop.theaa.com/store/travel-guides. Katie Stephens at katie.stephens@theaa.com.

### Anova Books

www.anovabooks.com. Helen Ponting at hponting@anovabooks.co

### Bradt Travel

www.bradtguides.com. Rachel Fielding at rachel.fielding@bradtguides.com

### Brit's Guide

www.foulsham.com. Margaret Lashbrook at margaret.lashbrook@lineone.net or Sue Wilkins at wilkins@foulsham.com.

### Cicerone

www.cicerone.co.uk. Sarah Spencer at sarah@cicerone.co.uk

### Eland Publishing

www.travelbooks.co.uk. Barnaby Rogerson at barnaby@travelbooks.co.uk.

### Fisher's Travel SOS

www.fisherstravelsos.com. Furgan Syed at furgan.syed@fisherstravelsos.com.

### Global Travel Publishers

www.africa-adventure.com. Kate Bandos at kate@ksbpromotions.com.

### Globetrotters LogBook

www.globetrotterslogbook.com. Giedo Claes at giedo@globetrotterslogbook.com

### Hudson's Historic Houses and Gardens

www.hudsonsheritage.com. Tanya Aspinwall at tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk

### Inn House Publishing

www.innhousepublishing.com. Kathryn McWhirter at kathrynmcwhirter@btopenworld.com.

### Insight

www.insightguides.com. Julia Spence at julia.spence@ukonline.co.uk.

### In your pocket guides

www.inyourpocket.com. Craig Turp at editor@inyourpocket.com.

### Jane's Smart Art Guides

www.JanesSmartArt.com. Jane McIntosh at MJM@JanesSmartArt.com

### Jonglez Publishing

www.jonglezpublishing.com. Alexandre Thery at alexandre@editionsjonglez.com.

### Kuperard Publishers

www.kuperard.co.uk. Geoffrey Chesler at geoffreychesler@btinternet.com.

### Morris Communications

www.themilepost.com. Kate Bandos at kate@ksbpromotions.com.

### Odyssey Books & Guides

www.odysseypublications.com. Caroline Eden at caroline@odysseypublications.com

### The Official (UK) Tourist Board Guides

www.visitor-guides.co.uk. Tanya Aspinwall at tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk

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### Rough Guides

www.roughguides.com. press@roughguides.com

### The Signpost

www.signpost.co.uk. Tanya Aspinwall at tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk

### Summersdale travel publications

www.summersdale.com. Dean at dean@summersdale.com.

### Take two Books

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### Turnleft

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