



The Alliance

Bulletin

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

September 2015

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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.

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.

Partners

Bateaux London

Bateaux London offers the most luxurious cruises on the River Thames, where visitors can be wined and dined in style and learn more about the capital.

The boats, operated by Sodexo Prestige, offer lunch, dinner and jazz cruises, along with afternoon tea cruises.

Bateaux London has a sister operation in Paris, Bateaux Parisiens.

Visit : www.bateauxlondon.com. Contact emma@sortedpr.com.

Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism, California

Palm Springs has over 350 days of sunshine and stunning natural beauty. Palm Springs has the largest collection of mid-century modern architecture in the country as well as a vibrant arts & culture scene, including several film festivals.

Palm Springs is the gateway to national parks including Joshua Tree National Park and Mt San Jacinto, which is accessed via the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway.

Palm Springs has over 150 lodging properties including chic small hotels, luxurious resorts and spas, and vacation home rentals.

Media fams are conducted year long with itinerary assistance for individual press trips. Visit : www.visitpalmsprings.com. Contact : Sarah Hahne at shahne@visitpalmsprings.com.

Agencies

NH Communications (USA)

NH Communications represents a range of tourism businesses in Florida.

Contact : Nancy Hamilton Musser at NHCommunications@comcast.net.

Brighter Comms (UK)

Brighter Comms is a travel and tourism focussed communications agency based in Cardiff, Wales.

Visit : www.brightercomms.co.uk. Contact : Harriet Davies at harriet@brightercomms.co.uk

News

Denbies 'Vine and Dine' 2015 October Harvest Grape picking

Denbies Wine Estate, Dorking, Surrey, with 265 acres of vines, is the largest single estate vineyard in the UK.

The Estate has a range of 14 wines and produces over 450,000 bottles of wine per annum.

Denbies Vine & Dine Grape picking das, during October, is the only experience of its kind in the UK and since its introduction in 2006 has attracted visitors from all over the country.

Denbies 'Vine and Dine' allows the public first-hand experience in the workings of the vineyard and winery.

The experience includes tuition in grape picking, harvesting the grapes, a traditional rustic vineyard workers lunch accompanied with Denbies wine, watching the picked grapes being pressed, and tasting the 'must' (grape juice).

The day concludes with wine tasting in the Denbies cellars. All participants receive an estate grown vine to take away.

Harvest is the most significant time in the year of the vineyard. In the brief window of October the foundations are laid for the wine production of the coming year.

With the 2014 vintage heralded as the biggest and best vintage in the history of the estate, 2015 is also looking to be another outstanding year.

Denbies Vine and Dine is available Monday to Saturday throughout October at £53.00 per person (group rate available on request)

Visit : www.denbiesvineyard.co.uk. Contact : Jeannette Simpson at jsimpson@denbiesvineyard.co.uk.

Aruba

The island of Aruba is a finalist for the 2015 World Responsible Tourism Awards to be announced during World Travel Market in London in November.

This follows the island's success in winning the Destination Leadership category of the first National Geographic World Legacy Awards.

This recognised its drive to be the world's first country to be free of fossil fuel.

Visit : www.aruba.com. Contact : Joanna Walding at j.walding@aruba.com.

The pop-up golf course, Adelboden, Switzerland

The Golf Mountain pop-up golf course on Adelboden's Engstligenalp, which has been operating for five years, operates from 10 September to 25 October 2015

With 18 holes ranging from par 3s to a par 5s, Golf Mountain provides even the most skilled of golfers with a unique challenge.

Hazards include streams and rocky outcrops as well as swirling mountain winds and extreme weather conditions – one minute, golfers might be in bright sunshine, the next in dense cloud.

Located at 1,964 metres, and the highest golf course in Europe, Engstligenalp is a nature reserve with views over the village of Adelboden.

Visit : www.adelboden.ch. Contact : Sue Heady at sue@headycommunications.com.

Hilton London Euston

The Hilton London Euston is to invest more than £8 million on the refurbishment of the hotel.

Work will include a full revamp of all guest rooms, increasing the number of rooms the hotel has to offer and creating a brand new fitness centre. The hotel is made up of two Victorian town houses joined together and is located in the central Bloomsbury area.

The new design of the guest rooms is inspired by the heritage of the surrounding area which is well renowned for its culture, literary, artistic and social links in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Visit : www.euston.hilton.com contact : Aleksandra Dimova at Aleksandra.Dimova@Hilton.com.

Lonely Planet's Ultimate Travelist

Lonely Planet's Ultimate Travelist is the first-of-its-kind list from the publishers whose staff and writers have ranked the 500 best sights to see on the planet.

Visit : www.lonelyplanet.co.uk. Contact : Rebecca Law at rebecca.law@lonelyplanet.co.uk.

New De Koninck Brewery Experience Centre, Antwerp, Flanders

The De Koninck Brewery Experience centre opens on 1 September offering a 75-90 minute self-guided tour. situated just outside of the city centre, has been brewing for nearly two centuries.

Visit : www.dekoninck.be. Contact : Anita Rampall at anita@visitflanders.co.uk.

Red Panda cub born at Longleat Safari Park, Wiltshire

A rare red panda cub has been born at Longleat, which is the first time the Wiltshire safari park has successfully bred red pandas.

Dad Ajenda, which means 'King of the Mountain', came to Longleat from Germany in 2012 and mum Rufina ('red-haired'), arrived from Italy just a year later, following an appeal by keepers.

The birth is particularly welcome as this particular pairing is deemed to be critical to the ongoing success of European Endangered Species Programme for the Red Panda.

Found in Nepal, Bhutan and China, red pandas live among bamboo forests and spend much of their time in trees. In the wild red pandas are solitary animals, and they only really ever come together to breed.

Like giant pandas about two-thirds of their food intake is made up of bamboo.

Visit : www.Longleat.co.uk. Steve Mytton at steve.mytton@longleat.co.uk.

Leads

Ramblers Worldwide Holidays, New York

Ramblers Worldwide Holidays are offering a nine-day holiday to New York that includes walking to many of the city's iconic landmarks including visits to :

- Times Square and 42nd Street
- Fifth Avenue and Midtown Manhattan
- Central Park
- The Statue of Liberty and Empire State building
- the Rockefeller Centre, and
- museums, theatres and concert halls.

Visit : www.ramblersholidays.co.uk. Contact : Graham Ross at grahamross1@btconnect.com.

Mushroom foraging with Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas, Zagori, Greece

The Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas is now offering guests a curated foraging expedition and feast prepared with gathered ingredients as part of their new Mushroom Hunting Package.

Mushroom foraging takes place from September until late November each year.

Mushroom orientated dishes will draw on traditional recipes and be complemented by wild boar brought in by local hunters, greens collected from the mountainside, cheese from nearby farms and a cellar of Greek wine.

The Zagori region of Greece is currently under consideration for UNESCO world heritage status.

The Aristi Mountain Resort & Villas is located 40 minutes from Ioannina airport and 2.5 hours' drive from Thessaloniki airport.

The property is also a member of the Zagori Excellence Network and Small Luxury Hotels of the World group and is nominated in the 2015 World Luxury Awards.

Visit : www.aristi.eu/en. Contact : Melissa Dive at Melissa@ophirpr.co.uk.

Aqua-Firma, Ultimate Spitsbergen

Aqua-Firma, the wilderness travel company, has launched its 'Ultimate Spitsbergen' tours to the polar archipelago with wildlife and marine life polar experts.

Lying 600 miles from the North Pole, Spitsbergen is a fine location for exploring the vast array of Arctic marine and wildlife.

With 2,000 to 3,000 polar bears, hundreds of thousands of migrating birds, and pods of Blue, Fin, Beluga, Minke and Humpback whales, voyagers will photograph and observe Arctic animals in this wilderness.

From Spring to early Autumn, Aqua-Firma's Arctic voyages offer opportunities for sea and land exploration on board expedition cruises, classic tall ships and a smaller adventure sailing yacht.

Voyages last between 8 and 16 days.

Visit : www.aqua-firma.com. Contact : Lorna Irving at Lorna.Irving@rooster.co.uk.

American Attractions Collection

The American Attractions Collection is a collection of attractions and tours aimed at promoting some of the best tourist “must dos” in North America.

The Collection also offers money saving cards that provide travellers with meal deals.

The American Attractions Collection currently includes :

Orlando

- Artegon Marketplace
- Boggy Creek Airboat Rides
- Florida Dolphin Tours
- Fun Spot Attractions – Orlando & Kissimmee
- Orlando Balloon Rides
- Boggy Creek Airboat Rides
- Revolution Off Road Experience
- Mucky Ducks
- Wonderworks / Outta Control Dinner Show
- Kids Eat Free Card Orlando
- Dine 4Less Card Orlando

New York

- The Ride
- Inside Out Tours
- New York Water Taxi
- VIP Dine 4Less Card New York

Las Vegas

- Vegas Balloon Rides
- VIP Dine 4Less Card Las Vegas
- Shop & Dine Las Vegas

The attractions, tours and savings cards are available through :

- Do Something Different : www.dosomethingdifferent.com
- Attraction World : www.attractionworld.com, and
- Viator : www.Viator.com.

Contact : Margaret Henriksson at margaret@hatmarketing.com.

Arkansas River Tours

Arkansas River Tours has been offering exceptional whitewater rafting in Colorado since 1973.

Colorado’s Rocky Mountains have more major rivers than any other mountain range in the U.S.

Colorado’s Arkansas River, the most popular river in America, provides a variety of whitewater rafting experiences ranging from ½ day trips to multi-day trips with camping, easy whitewater for family vacation adventures to challenging extreme adventures in Class IV+ whitewater.

Three unique canyons, Bighorn Canyon, Brown’s Canyon and the Royal Gorge provide whitewater rafting trips for the timid beginner to the seasoned veteran.

Visit : www.arkansasrivertours.com. Contact : Bob Hamel at bob@arkansasrivertours.com.

Southern Cross Blue Cruising

Southern Cross Blue Cruising runs cruises on luxury, hand-crafted wooden gulets sailing through the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Turkey and Greece.

Sailings take in ancient coastlines with Roman, Byzantine and Crusader ruins, including sunken cities all of which are only accessible from the sea.

Visit : www.southerncrossbluecruising.com. Contact : Dina Street at info@southerncrossbluecruising.com.

Arizona in Summer

Visitors who can who can take the summer heat should consider scorching Scottsdale, Arizona, when room rates tumble.

Temperatures often rise into three figures (fahrenheit) in August and room rates in the desert city's hotels and resorts fall by as much as 60% off peak season prices, with a range of incentives to attract customers.

Scottsdale is known for its championship golf, spas, shopping, walks in the Sonoran Desert, cycle rides, Native American culture. Attractions include the country's largest butterfly museum, the Arizona Wing Aviation Museum and Desert Botanical Garden.

Visit : www.experiencescottsdale.com. Contact : Megan Neighbor at mneighbor@scottsdalecvb.com.

Sherpa Expeditions, the Isle of Wight, UK

Sherpa Expeditions has launched two new active breaks to the Isle of Wight.

Half of the island is designated as an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' and there are more than 300 miles of footpaths.

Visit : www.sherpaexpeditions.com. Contact : Tom Panagos at pr@worldexpeditions.co.uk.

Tangier Island, Virginia

Tangier Island, Virginia is located 12 miles of the coast of Virginia.

It is a fascinating island where locals speak with a unique Elizabethan accent, has virtually no cars and is a haven for wildlife. Visitors arrive by ferry and get around the island by golf buggy.

There's the chance to explore the island with a kayak water tour, enjoy a sunset cruise or go on crab shanty tour at one of the island's crabbing hotspots to get a real taste for island life.

Tangier Island has many water trails which lead paddlers to secluded beaches, marches full of waterfowl and quirky fishing villages along the coast.

Visit : www.tangierisland-va.com and CapitalRegionUSA.co.uk. Contact : Lisa Cooper at Lisa.cooper@kbc-pr.com.

Guadeloupe

Guadeloupe is a Caribbean island and overseas region of France located in the Leeward Islands.

Besides Guadeloupe island, the smaller islands of Marie-Galante, La Désirade, and the Îles des Saintes are included in Guadeloupe.

This French influenced Caribbean archipelago offers rain forests, waterfalls, clear waters and white sandy beaches, small villages and cuisine French culture.

The efficient inter-island connection network makes the Guadeloupe Archipelago an island-hopping destination, with all the islands are located within a mere 20-45 minute boat ride.

There is the chance to explore lush scenery, hike up the summit of La Soufriere volcano and canoe on the hidden rivers in the National Park or go kayaking down the Cousteau Reserve.

Visit : www.guadeloupe-islands.com. Contact : press@guadeloupe-islands.com.

Dauphin Island, Alabama

Dauphin Island is a town in Mobile County, Alabama on a barrier island also named Dauphin Island in the Gulf of Mexico.

The Estuarium at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab is an aquarium next to Mobile Bay on historic Dauphin Island, which focusses solely on the four native ecosystems of the Mobile Bay Estuary system.

The jewel of the facility includes a Living Marsh Boardwalk, where visitors can gaze at the landmarks of Mobile Bay and spot the native birds flying lazily by, and the Miss May May, an interactive boat with a shrimp trawl trailing behind.

Its newest exhibit is an outdoor Ray Touch Tank, which is populated with cownose and Southern stingrays.

The Gulf of Mexico is "America's Sea" and produces most of the USA's domestic oil and natural gas, and also yields almost half of all the seafood in the nation.

Visit : www.estuarium.disl.org. Contact : Lisa Young at lyoung@disl.org.

La Compagnie

Operating between Paris and New York since July 2014, La Compagnie is now offering a direct all-business-class flight from London Luton to Newark, NJ.

Visit : www.lacompagnie.com. Contact : Chloe Bowditch chloe@grifcopr.com.

Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

Rothenburg ob der Taube, is situated near Nuremberg and Würzburg in North-West Bavaria.

The town can trace its history back to the 1000 and attracts people from all over the world due to its medieval Old Town with its town wall, cobble stoned alleyways, half-timbered houses, churches, parks and museums.

From 1274 – 1802, Rothenburg was granted the right to be a Free Imperial City, which meant that Rothenburg could govern itself, make its own currency, and develop its own system of measurement.

As the city grew and developed with its economic and political power, it became one of the largest, most thriving cities in the Old Empire with over 6000 inhabitants.

In 1974 the citizens of Rothenburg decided to create a festival for the 700th anniversary of the imperialization, in order to remember this important time period.

The Imperial City Festival

The Imperial City Festival, which takes place annually in early September, sees Rothenburg's residents organising into different historical groups.

The festival opens with a torchlight procession of these groups, followed by a firework display with music on the Rothenburg Market Square.

Visit : www.tourismus.rothenburg.de. Contact : presse@rothenburg.de.

What's on

Events in Aruba

22nd Annual Aruba Reef Care Project

1 to 30 September 2015

Hundreds of participants – locals and visitors – take part annually in Aruba's largest volunteer initiative, a clean-up of beach and dive and snorkel sites.

9th Annual Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival 2015

25 and 26 September 2015

This festival has a line-up of international and local jazz, soul and funk musicians at Renaissance Market Place along with food stands and bars.

Visit : www.seajazz.com.

Aruba International Bike Week

26 October to 1 November 2015

Hundreds of bikers from around the world parade around the island.

Visit : www.aruba.com. Contact : Joanna Walding at j.walding@aruba.com.

Annual autumn events in Palma, Mallorca

Ella International Women Festival

1 to 9 September

The Ella International Women Festival is the first event of the season, a festival created for the modern LGBT woman that includes different activities such as inspirational talks, art exhibitions, outdoor concerts and sport activities.

Visit : www.ellafestival.com.

September Palma

11 and 12 September 2015

Palma will host the second edition of SolarFest Mallorca featuring some of the best of international indie-pop bands.

Visit : www.solarfestmallorca.com

La Nit de L'Art

19 September 2015

La Nit de L'Art is Mallorca's premier art event with around 15,000 visitors attending exhibitions, performances, video-installations and urban installations in a mix of traditional art venues such as cafes, private apartments, studios, balconies and facades of historic buildings.

Visit : www.nitdelartartpalma.com/en.

Festival Comic Nostrum

6 to 11 October 2015

Festival Comic Nostrum is Spain's premier festival dedicated to the art of comics with special exhibitions, events, debates and discussions.

The Festival Música Mallorca

10 October to 7 November 2015

The Festival Música Mallorca offers a series of classical music concerts every Saturday at the Theatre Principal in Palma.

Visit : www.musicamallorca.com.

Visit : www.visitpalma.com. Contact : Kate McWilliams atvkate@lotus-uk.co.uk.

The Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival

15 to 29 September 2015 (annual)

Voted one of the 25 coolest film festivals in the world by MovieMaker Magazine in 2014, the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival features films from and about the region.

There will be the screening of 100 new feature length and short films created by Caribbean film makers and 10 classic Caribbean films.

Visit : www.tffilmfestival.com, www.gotrinidadandtobago.com and www.visittobago.gov.tt. Contact : Johnson JohnRose at jjohnrose@caribtourism.com.

The first Guernsey International Food Festival

18 to 27 September 2015

The first Guernsey International Food Festival will take place all over the island and showcase Guernsey's local produce and dishes with special dinners, tours and interactive events.

As well as cook offs and live cooking demonstrations, there will be themed gastro events and the first dedicated Guernsey Beer & Cider Festival.

Visit : www.visitguernsey.com/food-festival. Contact Amelia Astley Birtwistle at Amelia@lotus-uk.co.uk.

The West Somerset Railway Autumn Steam Gala, Somerset UK

1 to 4 October 2015

The West Somerset Railway is holding its Autumn Steam Gala to mark four decades since the first train movements on England's longest "heritage" railway with an intensive timetable of trains over the 20 miles of route between Bishops Lydeard (four miles from Taunton) and Minehead.

There will be up to eight steam engines in action and the museums and workshops will be open plus model railways. The extra train services also offer a good opportunity to explore places of interest along the route including the old harbour town of Watchet with its narrow streets.

Museums, marina and local businesses. Washford is the alighting point for Cleve Abbey and the traditional Torre cider farm whilst Dunster station is 20 minutes walk from the medieval village with the 1000 year old castle, working water mill, Yarn Market building and Dolls Museum.

Alliance members are welcome to apply for press tickets.

Visit : www.wsrail.net. Contact John Simms at john.com@wsrail.net.

Gardaland Magic Halloween, North-Eastern Italy

Weekends from 3 October to 1 November 2015 (annual)

Gardaland is an amusement park located in North-Eastern Italy, which includes Gardaland, Gardaland Sea-Life, and the Gardaland Hotel.

During the Gardaland Magic Halloween the Park will be adorned in Halloween themed garb including pumpkins and cobs, haystacks and giant spider webs.

Visit : www.gardaland.it. Contact : Novella Candeo at pressgardaland@studionazari.it.

Biketoberfest, Daytona Beach, Florida, USA

15 to 18 October 2015

The 23rd Annual Biketoberfest motorcycle rally and festival will see more than 100,000 motorcycle enthusiasts and casual observers converge on Daytona Beach.

Since 1992, Biketoberfest has drawn thousands of riders to its motorcycle rally in Daytona Beach every October with the bikes themselves works of art.

locations throughout the Daytona Beach area, including Main Street, Riverfront Park and Mary McLeod Bethune Boulevard, will host events, with live music and food.

Visit : www.Biketoberfest.org.

The Daytona Beach area encompasses Daytona Beach, Daytona Beach Shores, Holly Hill, Ormond Beach, Ormond-By-The-Sea, Ponce Inlet, South Daytona and Wilbur-By-The-Sea.

Visit : www.DaytonaBeach.com. contact : Lori Campbell Baker at lcb@daytonabeach.com.

Hallowe'en in Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan

9 to 12, 15 to 18 and 22 to 25 October 2015

More than 1,000 carved jack-o'-lanterns line the spooky streets and alleys at Hallowe'en in Greenfield Village, where 20th century Halloween traditions are brought to life by costumed characters and interactive fun.

The Henry Ford in Dearborn, Michigan is a national historic landmark comprising :

- the Henry Ford Museum
- Greenfield Village
- The Ford Rouge Factory Tour
- The Benson Ford Research Center, and
- The Henry Ford IMAX Theatre.

Visit : www.thehenryford.org/halloween. Contact : Wendy Metros at WendyMe@TheHenryFord.org.

Lantern Festival: In the Spirit of Obon, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, Delry Beach Florida

17 October 2015

The Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens' annual fall celebration, the Lantern Festival: In the Spirit of Obon, is inspired by Japan's traditional three-day Obon holiday honoring ancestors.

It includes a lantern floating ceremony, taiko drum performances, fireworks display, Japanese folk-dancing and more.

The Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens has been a center for Japanese arts and culture in South Florida since its opening in 1977.

Visitors discover South Florida's heritage and its connection with Japan, and explore a series of six diverse gardens inspired by a different historical period and style of Japanese gardening.

Visit : www.morikami.org/lanternfest. Contact : Sofia Garcia at sgarcia@oandgpr.com.

Reasons to write about

Dorset, UK

Dorset is a county in South West England on the English Channel coast. It was the inspiration for many of Thomas Hardy's novels and comprises dramatic coastline, quintessentially English villages and rolling countryside.

Places to visit :

Sculpture by the Lakes

This sculpture park, with gardens designed by Monique Gudgeon, provides a tranquil backdrop for Simon Gudgeon's monumental sculpture.

The park creates an environment that blends nature's beauty with inspiring works of art, free from the constraints of enclosed spaces of a traditional gallery.

The 26 acre park also offers formal planting alongside wildflower meadows, making it as much a destination for garden and nature lovers, as it is for art enthusiasts.

Visit : www.sculpturebythelakes.co.uk.

The Jurassic Coast: Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door

The Jurassic Coast is England's first natural UNESCO World Heritage Site, covering 95 miles of coastline from East Devon to Dorset.

Lulworth is known for its dramatic cove and awe-inspiring Durdle Door, a natural arch jutting out to sea, this section of the Dorset coastline is geological sculpture at its finest.

Visit : www.lulworthonline.co.uk.

Dorset Coast Express and Swanage Railway

The Dorset Coast Express and Swanage Railway allows passengers to enjoy the county's countryside on a historic steam locomotive.

The Swanage Railway runs through the Purbeck countryside, travelling past the remains of William the Conqueror's Corfe Castle. Steam trains run most weekends throughout the year and daily from April to October.

Visit : www.swanagerailway.co.uk.

Hardy's Cottage and Max Gate

Hardy's Cottage is Thomas Hardy's modest birthplace while Max Gate is his later grand Victorian home.

Hardy's Cottage, birthplace of the famous author in 1840, is where Hardy wrote several of his early short stories, poetry and novels.

The house's open hearths, small windows and stone floors tells of a tougher life than the idyllic rose-framed garden first suggests.

Visit : www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardys-cottage.

Max Gate, designed by Hardy himself, reflects his position as established and successful writer to polite society. This sophisticated town house was designed by Hardy in 1885.

Visit : www.nationaltrust.org.uk/max-gate.

Sladers Yard, Bridport

Showing British art, handmade furniture and designer craft, Sladers Yard is located in an historic Georgian rope warehouse.

The year round series of solo exhibitions are complimented by regular jazz concerts, poetry events and an award winning restaurant. Located in Bridport the gallery is a five minute walk from the beach and harbour in West Bay, Dorset.

Visit : www.sladersyard.wordpress.com.

Visit : www.visit-dorset.com. Contact : Charlotte Hancock at charlotte@goldensquared.com.

The West Virginia State Park System

West Virginia is located in the Appalachian and South-eastern regions of the United States, east of the Mississippi River.

It is known for its outdoor recreational offerings, diverse topography, and its political history.

West Virginia is home to 2,000 miles of rivers and streams. In addition, both the Appalachian Mountains and the Allegheny Mountains extend into West Virginia.

The West Virginia State Park System which comprises 36 state parks, seven state forests, five wildlife management areas, the Greenbrier River Trail in the east and the North Bend Rail Trail in the north-central and western regions.

The state is around 80% forested and has become well known for various outdoor recreational activities including hiking, fishing, mountain biking, boating and white water rafting.

Conservation efforts among animals have also become important in West Virginia. The state animal, the American Black Bear is a symbol for West Virginia, but is still a threatened species.

Due to conservation efforts, new knowledge, and a better understanding of the animal, the bear population has been increasing, and the species now lives in all of West Virginia's 55 counties.

Visit www.wvtourism.com. Contact Jane Wilson at wv@attachcommunications.co.uk.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is one of the young federal states in the eastern part of Germany.

With its access to the Baltic Sea, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has always been one of the most popular tourist destinations and has surged following the reunification of Germany in 1990.

The European Tourism Institute declared Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Germany's most popular summer destination in 2010.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is a popular destination for cultural travel in Germany and has the country's clearest water, cleanest air and the most sunshine.

It is also one of Germany's top spots for active vacations with almost three million visitors cycling during their stay.

There are also 17 golf courses and water sports enthusiasts can take advantage of a network of nearly 350 marinas, sports boat harbours, and moorings with 14,000 moorings on the coast and 11,000 moorings inland.

Visit : www.auf-nach-mv.de. Contact : Tobias Weitendorf at t.weitendorf@auf-nach-mv.de.

Thrill rides in the Great Lakes USA

The Great Lakes USA is the largest expanse of freshwater in the world with a diverse landscape.

This region which is the size of continental Europe includes the U.S. states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Minnesota

Shredder's Mutant Masher at Mall of America®

Shredder's Mutant Masher will be the newest thrill ride when it opens in Mall of America's Nickelodeon Universe® in the autumn.

The 5,000-square-foot interactive attraction will send riders through a unique mutation experience during a daring thrill ride experience.

Riders will begin by stepping into a 'mad-scientist-like lab', passing props like hazardous material containers and the remnants of past mutant experiments. Riders will swing and spin more than 50 feet in the air, with the ride functioning as a giant pendulum.

Visit : www.mallofamerica.com.

Wisconsin

Bay Beach Amusement Park

Located right on the Green Bay waterfront, Bay Beach Amusement Park opened in 1892 and is home to more than 20 nostalgic rides, including two new ones being added this summer.

The Tot Jumping Spring is a vertical ride that carries kids and their parents up and down a 40-foot column and the Rockin' Tug is a tug boat on land, moving riders along a half pipe ramp while the tug spins for a feeling of being on a stormy sea.

Visit www.travelwisconsin.com/amusement-parks/bay-beach-amusement-park-203589

Illinois

Seadog Cruises

Seadog Cruises and Chicago Children's Museum have come together to offer a special Lakefront Speedboat Tour and Museum Admission Ticket.

The 30-minute speedboat ride includes music, entertainment, fun and wide-open views of Chicago's skyline with Seadog Cruises before exploring a new nautical-themed exhibit where kids can captain their own adventures overlooking spectacular Lake Michigan.

Visit : www.seadogcruises.com

Ohio

Cedar Point

Cedar Point, The Roller Coaster Capital of the World!®, has introduced Rougarou, with the previous Mantis stand-up roller coaster converted into a new floorless design.

In addition, the two-year transformation of Hotel Breakers is now complete.

Visit : www.cedarpoint.com.

Contact : Georgina Evans-Phillips at georgina@cellet.co.uk.

New motorhome driving

Early each year, the major motorhome rental companies in North America take delivery of their new vehicles ready for spring and summer customers.

Though the nearest point to the factories will be Chicago, some of their most popular rental locations are out in America's west.

As a result, very attractive prices are offered to everyone who will take a one way drive across America, early in the year.

Small, medium and large motorhomes will be ready to leave Chicago between February and March and need to arrive in Los Angeles, San Francisco or Las Vegas no later than 1 April.

The initiative allows travellers to take in Route 66 from Chicago to LA; the Rockies; Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon and the Pacific Ocean.

The Motorhome Experts can also offer advice and assistance with motorhome touring in the USA and Canada at any time of the year,

Visit : www.TheMotorhomeXperts.com. Contact : Linda@TheMotorhomeXperts.com.

Scenic European rail journeys

Swiss lakes and mountains

This journey, from Montreux to Interlaken on the Golden Pass Line, takes in Lake Geneva and passes through resorts like Gstaad and Châteaux d'Oex.

It includes Europe's highest railway station at the summit of Jungfrauoch.

Norway in a Nutshell

Norway in a nutshell combines the Bergen Railway, the Flam railway, the Aurlandsfjord, the Nærøyfjord and the Stalheimskleiva road.

Starting from Oslo the trip uses the Flam railway, descending deep into the fjord along the world's steepest regular-track railway line.

There is a drop of 861 metres in an hour as the panorama shifts from grand mountains to sparkling waterfalls.

Germany's Rhineland

Starting at Cologne this trip goes down the Rhine Valley to Koblenz, with palaces, churches, fountains and a real 'old world' charm.

There is also the chance to cruise down the river or take a daytrip to historic Rudesheim, before heading up the Moselle.

The trip passes through the heart of the Rhineland-Palatinate and along the Moselle from Koblenz to Trier – Germany's oldest city – which boasts a UNESCO-listed Cathedral and a picture perfect market square.

Railbookers

Railbookers is an independent travel company, specialising in tailor made rail holidays across Europe and the world.

Visit : www.railbookers.com. Contact : John Hale at PR@railbookers.com.

A place to stay

The Ramside Hall Hotel, Durham, UK

The Spa at Ramside, has opened at Ramside Hall Hotel, near Durham, offering some of the best facilities in the region has ever seen.

The launch of the spa, which has created around 60 new jobs, follows on from the creation of a second championship golf course in 2014 and a new wing of 47 bedrooms at the hotel which opened earlier this year.

Along with its five pools – including a 25 metre swimming pool, outdoor vitality pool, balcony infinity pool and one of the UK's largest hydrotherapy pools – the spa also has a thermal suite offering a range of facilities and a specialised Sleep Sanctuary retreat with soundwave therapy beds.

Other facilities include 14 treatment rooms, a Rasul mud chamber and a beauty snug which can also be booked exclusively for special occasions with use of the pedicure thrones, nail bar and make-up parlour.

The Spa at Ramside also has its own hairdressing salon by Reef and an Asian Fusion restaurant which will offer a variety of snacks and meals throughout the day.

Visit : www.ramsidespa.co.uk. Contact : Shannon Hodge at shannon@sortedpr.com.

Elizabeth Taylor's private estate, Palm Springs, California

Visitors to Palm Springs have an opportunity to rent the former home of Dame Elizabeth Taylor, the latest property to join the Californian city's portfolio of celebrity home rentals.

Located in the upmarket Las Palmas neighbourhood, the expansive and gated "Casa Elizabeth" residence reflects the style and glamour for which the iconic Cleopatra star was famed.

It features four bedrooms, four-and-a-half bathrooms, a large pool area with waterfall features and a spa, outdoor shower and kitchen, and extravagant furnishings such as ornate chandeliers and striking artwork, including an Andy Warhol painting of Dame Elizabeth Taylor and even original works of art painted by Taylor herself.

About Palm Springs

One hundred miles east of Los Angeles, Palm Springs is a desert destination with year-round sunshine, blue skies and natural beauty.

Located beneath California's San Jacinto Mountains, the city is famed for its Hollywood legacy, Native American heritage and collection of mid-century modern architecture.

Visit : www.visitpalmsprings.com. Contact : Sarah Habicht at sarah@humewhitehead.co.uk.

AVANI Bangkok Riverside, Thailand

AVANI Bangkok Riverside, which is soon to open, is located 15 minutes by luxury shuttle boat from the heart of Bangkok and opposite Asiatique, the city's largest night market.

Visit : www.avanihotels.com. Contact : Emily Wilson at Emily@grifcopr.com.

The Iron Mountain Hot Springs, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

The Iron Mountain Hot Springs has opened on the banks of the Colorado River in Glenwood Springs. The resort offers 16 mineral hot springs soaking pools and a freshwater family pool with a jetted spa.

Colorado is a four-season destination offering adventure and recreational activities, an abundant arts scene, Western heritage, distinctive cuisine, and 25 ski resort areas.

The state's scenic landscape boasts natural hot springs, the headwaters of four major rivers, many peaceful lakes and reservoirs, eleven national parks and monuments, and 58 mountain peaks that top 14,000 feet.

Visit : www.IronMountainHotSprings.com. Contact : Georgina Evans-Phillips at georgina@cellet.co.uk.

The Llandudno Bay Hotel, Wales

Llandudno's newest four star property, the Llandudno Bay Hotel is a boutique hotel situated on the sea front Promenade, with views across the Llandudno bay.

The hotel is located within a Grade II listed Victorian building and has recently undergone a £4 million renovation.

It is part of the HotelREZ Hotels & Resorts portfolio of independent hotels located in over 27 countries around the world.

Visit : www.hotelrez.co.uk. Contact : Ana Machado at ana.machado@hotelrez.com.

Hotel Crillon le Brave, Provence

Crillon Le Brave is located close to some of the best truffles of in Provence and the hotel is offering three English speaking wine and truffle hunting weekends for November 2015.

Guests will have the chance to prepare and cook during a demonstration with Crillon le Brave's Head Chef, Jérôme Blanchet and visit Châteauneuf-du-Papes's finest winery estates.

Visit : www.crillonlebrave.com. Contact : Nadia Walford at Nadia@grifcopr.com.

Cefalù, Sicily

The Arabic and Norman cathedral in the historic Sicilian seaside town of Cefalù has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage status.

The town itself has medieval winding streets and harbourside bustle with the rocky crag, Rocca de Cefalù, dominating its coastal town setting besides the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Massimo Villas has a number of villas here including :

Villa Splendida : in a peaceful setting high in the hills above Cefalù with panoramic seascapes and leading on to the Madonie National Park.

Terrazza Gabbiano : a townhouse in a private palazzo in the heart of Cefalù, which is the home of a well-known local artist.

Villa Talia : with sea views and mountain scenery

Villa Magnifica : a large Sicilian villa surrounded by private grounds and mature trees in a hillside setting overlooking Cefalù.

Visit : www.massimovillas.com. Contact : Rachel Agnel at rachel@massimovillas.com.

Helengeli Island, the Maldives

Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts will open the new value-focused resort OBLU by Atmosphere on Helengeli Island on 1 November 2015.

Helengeli Island is found on the eastern rim of the North Malé Atoll, and the new resort is a 40-minute speedboat ride from Malé International Airport.

As one of the only east-west pieces of land that make up the group of islands within the North Malé Atoll, Helengeli's southern side forms the feeding channel into the atoll with an abundance of predatory marine life passes through.

It is also one of the most popular locations in the Maldives for channel diving.

The waters around the island have also been declared a no-fishing zone so that resort guests will have exclusive access to explore this turtle and tropical fish.

OBLU by Atmosphere at Helengeli follows the Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives, which opened in December 2013.

Visit : www.oblu-helengeli.com. Contact : Stuart Fyfe at Atmosphere@rooster.co.uk.

The Reverie, Saigon

The Reverie Saigon, Vietnam, which opens in September 2015, has 286 individually furnished rooms by some of Italy's finest design houses, and views views over the Saigon River.

Visit : www.thereveriesaigon.com. Contact : Claire Griffin at Claire@grifcopr.com.

Vaya Adventures : South America

Vaya Adventures, which offers premier bespoke vacations in South America, has announces its new South American Grand Tour that takes in five countries in 31 days.

The tour begins in the Andean capital of Quito, Ecuador, before a small-ship wildlife cruise through the Galapagos Islands.

Guests will explore Peru's ancient ruins; walk through Santiago, Chile; hike the vast wilderness of Patagonia; ice trek in Glaciares National Park and visit Buenos Aires before ending in Rio de Janeiro.

Visit : www.vayaadventures.com. Contact : Sara Widness at sara@widnesspr.com.

LE Hotels

LE Hotels has added two new properties, in Spain and Australia, to its portfolio and re-launched four properties after yearlong renovations.

The new hotels added to the collection are :

Limes Hotel – Brisbane, Australia is amodern, boutique hotel, the Limes Hotel is located in the one of the trendiest neighborhoods in Brisbane.

BCN Urban Gran Rosellón – Barcelona, Spain is located in the financial district of Barcelona.

The completed hotel renovation projects are :

King George Hotel – San Francisco, California : Dating back to 1914, the recently renovated King George Hotel in San Francisco maintains the classic charm of a historic building.

The Empress Hotel - La Jolla, California : Located in the seaside village of La Jolla, the Empress Hotel is a short stroll from the Pacific Ocean.

Hotel Le Littré – Paris, France : The Hotel Le Littré, located in a restored Parisian building, sits along the left bank of the Seine River.

Terrass” Hôtel – Paris, France : Built in 1911, the Terrass” Hôtel is reopening after an extensive renovation.

L.E. Hotels has a portfolio of independently owned and operated properties in 18 countries.

Visit : www.lehotels.com. Contact : Stefan Pollack at Spollack@ppmgcorp.com.

Verdura Resort, Sicily

Located next to the Mediterranean, Sicily's Verdura Resort provides a five-star golf course

Designed by world-famous golf architect Kyle Phillips, Verdura's golf course has been host to the Sicilian Open in 2012 and is set in 230 hectares of landscape with sea views.

Verdura – a Rocco Forte hotel features two 18-hole championship courses – the East Course and West Course – as well as a par-three nine hole course.

Complementing its golf courses are extensive practice facilities including a double-ended driving range and golf academy.

The resort is found on Sicily's southern coast between Agrigento and the fishing city of Sciacca, an 80-minute drive from Trapani and Palermo airports.

Away from the fairways, guests can enjoy other sports and leisure facilities including six tennis courts, a 60m two-tiered infinity pool, a 170sqm fully-equipped gym and an award-winning 4,000sqm spa complex.

Visit : www.roccofortehotels.com. Contact : Luke Frary at luke@theazaleagroup.com.

Anantara Tangalle Peace Haven Resort & Spa, Sri Lanka

The new Anantara Tangalle Peace Haven Resort & Spa is located on the South Coast of Sri Lanka, one hour along the coast from Colombo.

Designed like a temple structure, the hotel will have a total 152 guest rooms .

Close by is the Yala National Park, which is home to leopards and sloth bears.

Visit : www.anantara.com. Contact : Charlotte Rous at Charlotte@grifcopr.com.

Dorsett Putrajaya, Malaysia

The Dorsett Putrajaya will open in September 2015 in in the garden city of Putrajaya, which is located 30km south of capital Kuala Lumpur.

Visit : www.dorsetthotels.com. Contact : Lallie Fraser at Lallie@grifcopr.com.

Tanjong Jara Resort, East Coast Malaysian Experiences

The Tanjong Jara Resort is a luxurious hideaway in a relatively undiscovered part of Malaysia.

The hotel bases itself on the Malay concept of Sucimurni, which emphasises purity of spirit, health and well-being.

Visit : www.tanjongjararesort.com. Contact : Thea Harley at Thea@grifcopr.com.

Element Hotels, China

Starwood Hotels & Resorts will open three more Element hotels in Greater China within the next four years.

Element's Asia Pacific flagship, the Element Suzhou Science and Technology Town in Suzhou, China opened recently.

Element Hotels set to open in Greater China by 2019 include:

Element Chongli (2017)

Situated in Zhangjiakou, co-host city of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, in Chongli County, Hebei Province, the hotel will be located in Sitaizui Village.

A vibrant ski area surrounded by mountains, the 150-room hotel is a 30-minute drive from Chongli County Center and 90 minutes from Zhangjiakou Ningyuan Airport (ZQZ).

Element Sanya Haitang Bay (2018)

Surrounded by mountains with beach views, Element Sanya Haitang Bay will be located in the Haitang Bay District in the southern part of Hainan Island, known as the Hawaii of the East.

The 204-room hotel is a 40-minute drive from Sanya's city center and 50 minutes from Sanya Phoenix International Airport (SYX).

Element Tianjin Beichen (2019)

The 200 room Element Tianjin Beichen will overlook the Northern Canal of the Hai River, and close to the Tianjin Eye, a 120-meter Ferris wheel, and the 336-meter Tianjin Tower.

It will be located 30 minutes away from Tianjin's city center and 45 minutes from Tianjin Binhai International Airport (TSN).

Visit : www.starwoodhotels.com. Frank Tigani at frank.tigani@starwoodhotels.com.

Job shop

The International Travel Writers Alliance Job Shop 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
- 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

The World Cetacean Alliance designates Whale Heritage Sites to be designated around the world

The World Cetacean Alliance (WCA) has launched a new initiative to recognise those worldwide destinations which champion responsible whale and dolphin watching and celebrate the cultural importance of the cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) living in the waters around them.

The World Cetacean Alliance is the world's largest Partnership working to protect whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans), representing 70 partners in 23 countries worldwide.

Whale Heritage Site accreditation will be awarded to areas of the world considered to be centres of excellence and responsibility in taking care of and engaging with cetaceans.

The highest standards of responsible whale and dolphin watching must be achieved, but the accreditation requirements will go further, encouraging destinations to actively engage their own communities and the tourists who visit.

It is hoped that designation of a destination as a Whale Heritage Site will boost visitor numbers and the incomes of tourism providers, enable sustainable management of marine resources, and celebrate history, the environment and cultural identity.

It will also assist tourists in making the best choices about where to go to watch whales and dolphins in the wild.

Visit : www.whaleheritagesites.org, www.worldcetaceanalliance.org and www.visitazores.com. Contact : Helena Beard at helena.beard@travelbrandconsultancy.com.

The first Whale Heritage Sites Summit

The first Whale Heritage Sites Summit will be held between 28 and 30 October 2015 in the Azores Islands, reflecting the islands' long standing position as a destination for whale and dolphin enthusiasts.

Frequently listed in the world's top ten destinations to watch these creatures in the wild, the Azores have successfully transitioned from a whale hunting to a whale watching economy, and the islanders keep their cultural association with the whales and dolphins alive through a number of excellent museums and vibrant events.

The ambition is that the first site will achieve Whale Heritage Site status in 2016.



KidZania, London

KidZania, which has opened at Westfield London aims to change the way children enjoy education and entertainment.

The first experience of its kind in the UK, KidZania offers a real-life introduction to the world of work for children aged four to 14.

KidZania London offers children the opportunity to learn over 60 professions from surgeons and fashion stylists to cabin crew and hotel receptionists.

On entering their City, kids will find the streets lined with over 60 'real-world' establishments, including a hospital, police station, fire station, airline and theatre.

Each of these offer real-life role play adventures in a fun and safe environment.

Kids earn *kidZos*, the official currency of KidZania, with every job they perform.

Recognized at every *KidZania* city throughout the world, *kidZos* are used to buy products and services in *KidZania*.

Through each job and activity, kids learn about how society functions, financial literacy, adult professions, team work, independence, self-esteem and real-life skills.

On their first visit to a *KidZania*, children open their own personal savings account at the *KidZania* bank.

The more children work, the more they earn, and the more they can experience.

KidZania London is able to welcome up to 1,700 visitors at any one time, with the attraction looking to welcome an incredible 750,000 in its first year.

Other Kidzania locations

- KidZania Santa Fe, Mexico City
- KidZania Monterrey, Mexico
- KidZania Tokyo KidZania Jakarta
- KidZania Koshien (Osaka)
- KidZania Lisbon
- KidZania Dubai
- KidZania Seoul
- KidZania Cuicuilco, Mexico City
- KidZania Kuala Lumpur
- KidZania Santiago
- KidZania Bangkok

Locations in the pipeline

- KidZania Jeddah - Mall of Arabia
- KidZania São Paulo - Eldorado Shopping
- KidZania Singapore - Sentosa Island
- KidZania Moscow
- KidZania Manila - Bonifacio Global City
- KidZania London
- KidZania Doha
- KidZania United States
- KidZania Busan

A review of KidZania

Kidzania is a city where kids can play, shop, earn and learn in a safe and exciting environment *writes Ann Mealor*

The 'town' is beautifully designed with colourful attractive shop fronts, brick effect roads, Victorian lampposts, trees, benches, cafes – an extremely clean and life size toy town.

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KidZos can be earned by taking part in a variety of activities such as recycling paper, helping out in the local supermarket or learning how to apply first aid at the hospital.

Earnings can then be spent on making a smoothie, a burger, jewellery or chocolate plus a host of other things.

The kids rule here, and there is little for adults to do except wait in the relaxing parents lounge where there is lots of comfy seating and papers and magazines to read or to sit and through the shop windows at the youngsters at work – quite enjoyable really.

Watching the puppet and magic show that the kids put on in the very cosy theatre was a treat and very entertaining.

There is lots of dressing up and role playing which the kids enjoy.

They are sent out and about on their own or in small groups as part of the police service to investigate mini crimes, as officials to do health and safety checks or as couriers to deliver parcels to the various shops.

A great opportunity to pick-up life learning skills.

The age range for *Kidzania* is 4-14, but I think 7-11 year olds get the most out of this four hour learning and play experience.

Plan what you want to do before you go to make the most of the experience– there is lots of great information on the *Kidzania* website.

(Ann Mealar is Commissioning Editor of *AllWays traveller* : www.allwaystraveller.com)

Visit : www.kidzania.com. Contact : Jodie O'Brien at jodie.obrien@tcs-uk.net.



Vézelay, France

The medieval town of Vezelay is a commune in the Yonne department in Burgundy in north-central France.

It is a very attractive hill town known for Vézelay Abbey.

The town itself and the 11th century Romanesque Basilica of St Magdelene are designated UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Visitors to Vezelay will wander through the narrow, winding alleys lined with houses dating back to the Romanesque and Renaissance periods, including 17th and 18th centuries buildings, shops and business, art galleries, restaurants and cafés.

Vezelay is also one of most important sacred sites of the Christian World being one of the principal departure points for the pilgrimage to Santiago of Compostela in Spain.

In 1146, Saint Bernard preached the second crusade here, and 70 years later, the Franciscans founded their convent.

Philip Augustus and Richard the Lion Heart made their meeting point here for the third crusade in 1190.

The King Saint Louis passed by several times on pilgrimage as he loved coming to Vezelay to pray and be resourced.

When the pilgrims in the 13th century saw afar the abbey of Vezelay, they rejoiced at having finally reached their goal: the place of worship to the relics of Mary Magdalene.

Today, those who come to visit the basilica can experience more than a thousand years of history.

Bourgogne Vézelay

Bourgogne Vézelay is the local wine appellation.

Visit : www.vezelaytourisme.com. Contact : Agnès Milot at vezelay.otsi@wanadoo.fr.

Vineyards descend to the edge of the town and produce a range of mostly white wines, based mainly on the Chardonnay, Pinot noir and Melon de Bourgogne grape varieties.

About half of the production is marketed through the Cave Henry co-operative.

The vineyards are believed to have been established by the Monastery in the ninth century.

Musée Zervos

This museum has an exceptional collection of modern art (1920-1965) in the house where the writer, Romain Rolland, retired.

The museum presents a range of the art collections donated by Christian Zervos to the town and includes work by the great artists of the time like Dufy, Laurens, Picasso, Calder, Gonzalez, Léger, Ernst, Kandinsky, Brauner, Giacometti and Héliou and Miro.

Musée de l'OEuvre Viollet-le-Duc

A collection of archeological objects is presented in this house with its medieval basement, its terrace opening onto the Morvan.

Maison Jules-ROY

Overlooking the basilica, the writer's study is preserved as it was left when he died in June 2000.



Hyde Park Winter Wonderland, London

Winter Wonderland returns to Hyde Park with free admission to its winter festivities.

Friday 20 November 2015 to Sunday 3 January 2016

Among the major attractions :

The Magical Ice Kingdom

The Magical Ice Kingdom will host snow and ice sculptures, with children and adults invited to walk through the 'fairy forest to discover a frozen lake and the ice queen'.

The Magical Ice Kingdom is the biggest ice and snow sculpture experience of its kind in the UK.

The Ice Rink will be located around the parks Victorian Bandstand, with live music.

Stretching over 1,600m² it will be the UK's largest outdoor ice rink.

The Giant Observation Wheel

For those who want to gaze at the action from above, the iconic Giant Observation Wheel will illuminate the skyline.

Zippos Circus

Zippos Circus will be staged in the Mega Dome, the biggest circus venue in the UK.

The Circus returns with two shows :

Zippos Christmas Circus – The Perfect Gift a daytime show for all the family, and

Visit : www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com. Contact : Anna Hope at anna@akhcommunications.com.

Cirque Berserk : a danger-filled spectacle combining contemporary cirque style skills with thrilling stunt action, including the Globe of Terror, where three motorcyclists speeding at over 60mph inside a steel cage.

There will also be jugglers, acrobats, aerialists, dancers and musicians.

Other attractions include :

Santa Land, with Father Christmas, his Elves and a sack of free gifts.

The traditional German Christmas market with over 200 chalets.

The Angels Christmas Market with unusual and handmade gifts and crafts, including ceramics, candles, jewellery, wooden toys, nativity scenes and Christmas decorations.

The Bavarian Village serving bratwurst and mulled wine whilst hosting live music throughout the day and evening.

Among the many bars and restaurants Bar Ice, has ice crafted bar, tables, walls and sculptures.

Savoie Mont Blanc, France

Savoie Mont Blanc, which includes Savoie and Haute-Savoie departments, covers two thirds of the French Alps and has 110 ski resorts.

There are a range of new hotels and chalets in Savoie Mont Blanc for Winter 2015/16

Châtel

Chalet Mustang is a new luxury catered chalet located at 200m from the Linga cable car. It has five en-suite bedrooms, all with balconies, a large lounge and dining room.

Visit : www.skipds.co.uk

La Clusaz

The 5-star hotel Au Cœur du Village, part of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux collection, is opening a chalet.

Chalet Les Ecrins can sleep up to eight people, in its three en-suite bedrooms and has a spacious living room. Guests can enjoy all the hotel's services when staying in the chalet.

Visit : www.hotel-aucoeurduvillage.fr

Courchevel

White 1921 Courchevel is a new 4-star hotel, located in the heart of the resort. Built by French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, the hotel has 26 contemporary bedrooms decorated in a mountain style.

Visit : www.white1921.com/en.

Chalet Apopka is a new luxury chalet with views over the mountains.

Flaine

The Terminal Neige - Totem at the Grand Massif, which is the highest resort in Flaine, will have interiors designed in an ethnic spirit, with woven, woollen fabrics inspired by Native American culture, vintage furniture and a more urban soul integrating the latest technology.

Maisons & Hotels Sibuet also offers Les Dromonts in Avoriaz, l'Altapura in Val Thorens, and their four hotels in Megève.

Visit : www.terminal-neige.com

Beaufortain

Built in 1781, **Chalet Nantailly** used to be a farm which has been transformed into an eco-friendly accommodation.

Visit : www.chaletnantailly.fr

Val Cenis

The 4-star Le St Charles, will open in the centre of Val Cenis in December 2015 with 55 bedrooms and 38 apartments.

Visit : www.maranathahotels.com

St Martin de Belleville

Chalet l'Ecurie, a 130 year old Savoie stable, has been renovated into a luxury mountain retreat, with the original features complemented with natural materials and antique furniture.

Visit : www.morzinebarn.com/chalets/lecurie.



(Cont)

Samoëns

Villa Rose is a boutique hotel in the centre of Samoëns, with 5 bedrooms.

Visit : www.villarosesamoens.com.

Tignes

Le Taos, which is located in the heart of Tignes-le-Lac village, is a new 4-star hotel with 54 suites, by the Montagnettes group.

Inspired by the Taos village in New Mexico in the American Rockies, the hotel is decorated in mineral and smooth sand stones.

Visit : www.hotel-le-taos.com.

Val Thorens

Val Thorens' fourth 5-star hotel, **Le Pashmina** is a mountain property with 42 bedrooms and suites and eight apartments.

The hotel roof that opens out onto the sky so guests can sleep under the stars.

Visit : www.hotelpashmina.com.

Val d'Isère

The owners of the 5-star hotel Le Blizzard are opening **Hotel Village La Mourra** with 10 suites and four chalets.

Visit : www.hotelblizzard.com/en

Chamonix

Located in Chamonix centre, **Le Mercure** will re-open on 15 December, after being completely renovated.

Visit : www.mercure.com

Visit : www.savoie-mont-blanc.com. Contact : **Nadine Carle-Edgar** at nadine@montagnes.uk.com.

Les Gets

Owned by the Mirigay family since 1947, 4-star chalet-hotel **La Marmotte** is expanding with seven new family suites, in a chalet covered with old wood and stones.

Visit : www.hotel-marmotte.com

Les Arcs

A new 5-star residence, **Les Monarques**, is opening on 12 December in the Edenarc development, located above Les Arcs 1800.

Operated by Odalys, Les Monarques is easily accessible from Les Arcs 1800 by a new cable-car, Le Dahu.

Edenarc 1800 will then include a total of two 5-star residences, one 4-star apart-hotel (opened in summer 2015), as well as shops, restaurants, a kids club and a 800 square meter leisure centre with a pool, a Jacuzzi, a sauna, a steam room, and a fitness centre.

Châtel

Four-star Odalys residence **Les Fermes de Châtel** will open in December 2015. Made of three large chalets with 90 apartments, it also has a well-being centre as well as an indoor pool.

www.odalys-vacances.com

Samoëns

Les Chalets de Layssia is a new CGH residence will open on 19 December 2015, with traditional Savoyard architecture.

www.cgh-residences.com

The International Travel Writers Alliance



The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel writers, editors, broadcasters and photographers.

www.itwalliance.com

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