

The Alliance

bulletin

Issue 160: mid-April 2014

www.itwalliance.com

Providing key information on a no-frills format for professional who travel to write, edit, broadcast or create images. Editor : Ashley Gibbins : Ashley@itwalliance.com

Contents

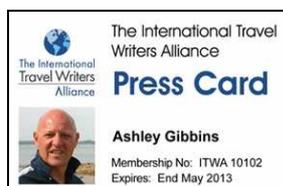
- **Job shop** : Enabling the Alliance's partners to place - and journalists to receive - information on in-house jobs, special assignments or one-off projects.
- **Working with the Alliance** : Partners and agencies have registered with the Alliance.
- **News** : News items of interest to travel journalists.
- **Leads** : Story ideas from travel partners and their agencies.
- **What's on** : Annual or special events, celebrations and commemorations.
- **Reasons to write about** : More detailed information on potential features
- **A place to stay** : new, unusual, interesting or convenient accommodation worldwide.
- **Alliance special supplements** : Christchurch, New Zealand and Toronto, Canada
- **Travel guides** : Travel guide publishers offering review copies to Alliance members.

Registering with the Alliance

To register with the Alliance visit : www.itwalliance.com, and register as a :

- **Member** : travel writers, broadcasters and photographers
- **Editor** : commissioning editors
- **Partner** : travel and tourism industry organisations, or
- **Agency** : agency representatives with travel or tourism clients

The Alliance press card



The International Travel Writers Alliance Press Card now provides Alliance journalists with formal recognition of their status and standing – and a roving ambassador's role - in the profession.

For more information contact Ashley Gibbins at Ashley@itwalliance.com.

Join and follow



http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=2978414&trk=hb_side_g



@writersalliance

The Alliance bulletin

Job shop

The International Travel Writers Alliance Job Shop.

The **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.

The Alliance's travel journalists can also :

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

Although in its infancy, we hope the **Job Shop** will become a valuable addition to the range of services offered by the **International Travel Writers Alliance**.

Visit : www.jobtarget.com/home/home.cfm?site_id=14773

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

The Palm Beaches, Florida, USA

Come explore The Palm Beaches, and experience what so many loyal visitors have already discovered to be the best way to experience Florida.

Enjoy a fascinating array of cultural venues, sample the culinary masterworks of celebrity chef-owned restaurants, and take in one of dozens of internationally renowned destination events.

Fish or dive in the Gulf Stream-warmed waters, take pleasure in the breathtaking beauty of the unique Florida ecosystem, and make memories at some of the many family-friendly attractions.

Soak up sunshine on pristine beaches and golf on world-class courses. Shop trendy downtown districts and absorb the energy of vibrant nightlife.

Visit : www.palmbeachfl.com. Contact : Scott Schoenen at sschoenen@mypalmbeachfl.com.

HomeExchange.com

HomeExchange.com is an online home exchange travel company with 50,000+ Members making 120,000 home swaps across more than 150 countries.

Its site is now available in 16 different languages.

Visit : www.homeexchange.com. Contact : Wendy Richmond at wendy@rmgandco.com.

Kid & Coe (USA)

Kid & Coe is on a mission to make family travel as easy as ABC.

It provides a carefully selected list of kid-friendly residences, including family homes and vacation rentals, combined with curated insider guides to select destinations to help visitors live like a local family.

From child care essentials to coveted neighbourhood locations, the company offers everything you need to make a home away from home for the whole family."

Visit : www.kidandcoe.com Contact : LauraHall at Laura@kidandcoe.com.

Alpine Antics (UK)

Alpine Antics create adventure get-aways perfect for the thrill-seeking stag or hen and great for a group of friends up for a laugh!

Not many people realise that when the snow melts the summer fun starts in Tignes - the adrenalin capital of the French Alps - as it transforms into a natural lakeside adventure playground.

Lake waterside, airbag lakewater jump, water zorbing, aerial high ropes...it's all on offer.

Visit : www.alpineantics.com. Contact : Katie Cooksey at katie.cooksey@gmail.com.

Medical Travel Quality Alliance

The Medical Travel Quality Alliance (MTQUA), which promotes better quality and safety for medical tourists, has launched the first international Medical Tourism Certification for health and wellness providers and agencies around the world.

For the first time, travelers seeking medical treatment anywhere in the world can find hospitals, clinics and medical travel companies that have been certified for the quality of the non-clinical care and services they offer to medical travelers.

The Medical tourism certification is awarded to a hospital, clinic or medical tourism agency that meets the international standard of quality in 10 non-clinical areas that directly impact a medical tourist's wellbeing and good results.

Visit : www.mtqua.org. Contact : Caroline Bodanis at caroline@mtqua.org.

Agencies

Perception (UK)

Perception represent exclusive luxury hotels and venues in the UK and internationally.

Visit : www.perception-uk.com. Contact : Cath Couzens at info@perception-uk.com.

Ad Hoc PR (UK)

Ad Hoc is a boutique PR agency focusing on travel and hospitality clients.

Visit : www.adhocpr.com. Contact : Lisa Ronchetti at lisa@adhocpr.com.

Allison+Partners (USA)

Allison+Partners is a fast-growing global communications agency.

Visit : www.allisonpr.com. Contact : Annie Drury at annie@allisonpr.com.

News

Totally Thames, London

1 to 30 September 2014

Thames Festival Trust has unveiled plans for a month-long celebration of the Thames aimed at putting the 42-mile London stretch of the river at the heart of the capital's cultural and tourism industry.

Totally Thames will be an annual, 30-day programme of events that will bring together :

- arts, music and community festivals
- regattas river races, and
- a string of events run by groups across the 17 London riverside boroughs.

Totally Thames is being presented by the Thames Festival Trust in partnership with London First, London's leading business body, London & Partners, the Mayor's official promotional organisation for London, and other business and community partners.

Among the *Totally Thames* events planned are :

The Big Thames Tidy

31 August and 1 September 2014

Leading water charity, Thames21, hosts one of the biggest mass clean-ups the river has seen.

The Mayor's Thames Festival

1 to 30 September

The Mayor's Thames Festival, which has been held for 20 years, is London's only river-focused multi-arts festival and the largest of its kind in the world, promoting activities that reach up to the source of the Thames and down to its mouth.

Having expanded from a weekend event to 10 days in 2013, this festival will be held throughout September and along the 42-mile London stretch of the Thames.

The Royal Greenwich Tall Ships Festival

5 to 9 September 2014

The Royal Borough of Greenwich will host the largest fleet of Tall Ships to visit London in 25 years with a 5-day, free festival across historic Greenwich, Royal Arsenal Woolwich, Greenwich Peninsula and West India Dock.

There will be the chance to board the Tall Ships moored along the Greenwich waterfront. Events planned include fireworks displays, free cultural performances, music and entertainment at the festival villages and a crew parade and festival procession.

The Great River Race

27 September 2014

Also known as London's River Marathon, this boat race up the Thames attracts more than 300 crews from all over the globe.

Handel's Fireworks Music and Illuminations

14 September 2014

Handel's Fireworks Music and Illuminations at the Historic Royal Palaces will take place in the riverside Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace and be performed by a 30-piece orchestra and followed by Georgian fireworks display.

The full *Totally Thames* programme will be announced in July 2014.

Visit : www.totallythames.org, www.thamesfestival.org/trust, www.londonfirst.co.uk and www.londonandpartners.com. Contact: Una Devine at una@unadevine.com

Millbrook Golf and Spa Resort, Arrowtown, near Queenstown, New Zealand

The Millbrook Golf and Spa Resort, set on 500 acres of grounds in Arrowtown, was voted New Zealand's Best Golf Resort for the third time running at the 2014 year's World Travel Awards.

Visit : www.millbrook.co.nz. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

Lonely Planet's World Search

World Search is a new children's book series from Lonely Planet, which introduces a new generation of future travellers to the big wide world around them.

Aimed at readers aged 5 and up, these fun titles let kids lift the lid on a range of topics including Amazing Jobs, Incredible Animals and Busy Places.

Visit : www.lonelyplanet.com. For review copies contact : Jane Cook at jane.cook@lonelyplanet.co.uk.

New releases from Lonely Planet

Guide books

Chicago (7th edition)
Italy (11th edition)
Laos (8th edition)
London (9th edition)
San Francisco (9th edition)
Seattle (6th edition)
Vancouver (6th edition)

Pocket Series:

Pocket Florence (3rd edition)

Discover series:

Discover Rome (2nd edition)

Best Trips series:

Florida & The South (2nd edition)
New York & the Mid Atlantic (2nd edition)
Southwest USA (2nd edition)

Not For Parents series:

Africa
Asia
Europe
South America

Visit : www.lonelyplanet.com. For review copies contact : Jane Cook at jane.cook@lonelyplanet.co.uk.

Hotel developments in Aruba

The Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba lies 15 miles north of the South American coastline, giving it year-round sunshine, an average temperature of 32 degrees and a cooling breeze.

Three major international hotel chains have announced multi-million dollar investment plans for Aruba.

Hyatt Hotels and Resorts is to operate a new hotel in the capital Oranjestad. The group already operates the Hyatt Regency Aruba in the main resort hotel area on Palm Beach.

In addition, a new Hard Rock Hotel will open later this year in the capital.

Located near the capital Oranjestad, close to "old city" attractions it will add to the beach landscape of Aruba.

Featuring eco-friendly, sustainable energy construction elements, the hotel will include multiple restaurants, a casino and an entertainment experience exclusive to Hard Rock.

The Riu has closed the Westin Aruba Resort for a US\$60 million renovation and improvement programme, and will reopen in 2015 under the Riu flag, becoming a sister property to the Hotel Riu Palace Aruba, the all-inclusive resort on Palm Beach.

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

Barnum, Nottingham

Cameron Mackintosh and Michael Harrison will bring their production of the musical Barnum to Newcastle Theatre Royal from 17 to 28 February 2015.

The production opened at Chichester Festival Theatre's Theatre in the Park in July 2013 and became one of the most successful musicals in the 51 year history of the Festival Theatre.

The musical follows the irrepressible imagination and dreams of Phineas T Barnum, 'America's Greatest Showman' who teamed up with J A Bailey to create Barnum and Bailey's Circus – the Greatest Show on Earth.

Visit : www.theatreroyal.co.uk. Contact : Natalie Joyce at natalie.joyce@theatreroyal.co.uk.

Baby Beach, Aruba

Baby Beach, one of Aruba's most popular beaches, is undergoing a major improvement programme.

Baby Beach is a half-moon stretch of sand edging a shallow lagoon. Located at Seroe Colorado at the south eastern end of Aruba and close to the second city of San Nicolas, it is around 30 minutes by car from capital Oranjestad.

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

Royal Caribbean International

Jamie's Italian and leading holiday company Royal Caribbean International will open the first Jamie Oliver eaterie at sea.

RCI's Quantum of the Seas and Anthem of the Seas will feature a Jamie's Italian.

Quantum of the Seas' will open to guests during autumn 2014 and sail from New York and 'Anthem of the Seas' will open during spring 2015 and sail from Southampton.

Royal Caribbean International is a global cruise brand with 21 ships, calling on 270 destinations in 72 countries across six continents.

The line also offers cruise tour land packages in Alaska, Canada, Dubai, Europe, and Australia and New Zealand.

Visit : www.rccl.com. Contact : Lydia Rodrigues at lydiarodrigues@rccl.com.

The Lord Crewe Arms, North East England, UK

The Lord Crewe Arms in the medieval village of Blanchland, on the Northumberland-Durham border, reopens in April 2014 as a 21 bedroom country hotel, following a £1.5 million renovation. The property is Grade II listed, and dates back to the 1700s.

Visit : www.lordcrewearms.co.uk. Contact : Charlotte Doherty at charlotte.doherty@virgin.net.

Ham Yard Hotel, London UK

Firmdale Hotels will open Ham Yard in the heart of Soho in May.

Situated on a three-quarter acre site, the hotel will revolve around a unique outdoor public pedestrian thoroughfare connecting Great Windmill Street to Denman Street opening up historic Ham Yard and Denman Place to the public for the first time since the 1960s.

Its centrepiece will be a dramatic specially commissioned large scale bronze sculpture by Tony Cragg which will be surrounded by a number of fully grown oak trees and gardens.

Visit : www.firmdale.com. Contact : Sally Swadling at SallySwadling@firmdale.com.

The Lord Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

The Lord Baltimore Hotel, built in 1928, has reopened following a restoration.

The city's classic French Renaissance landmark stands 23 stories, is included in the National Register of Historic Places and is a member of Historic Hotels of America.

Art exhibitions are planned throughout the public spaces and will highlight local, national and global artwork.

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

Hudson's Heritage Weddings

Hudson's Heritage Weddings is a new weddings website launched for couples looking for a stately house or historic home for their UK wedding.

The site is run by Hudson's Historic Houses & Gardens, who have been providing information on the UK's historic houses & gardens for 27 years.

Venues include :

- Pentille Castle in Cornwall
- Clovelly Village in Devon
- Craig Y Nos Castle in Wales
- Ragley Hall in Warwickshire
- Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire
- Yaxley Hall in Suffolk
- Castle Howard in Yorkshire, and
- Kirklington Hall in Carlisle.

Visit : www.hudsonsweddings.com and www.stately-homesweddings.com. Contact : Tanya Aspinwall at Tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk.

Leads

Vancouver in Spring, Canada

Spring is one of the best times of year to enjoy a city break in Vancouver; the days are warmer, the nights are longer and the city comes alive with colour at the peak of cherry blossom season.

Each year, more than 40,000 cherry trees spring to life, decorating Vancouver's streets and parks with a canopy of white and pink blossoms.

The annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (April 3 to 28) celebrates the sakura (cherry blossoms in Japanese) with traditional Japanese food, live music, events and workshops including Haiku readings and origami making.

Visit : www.BritishColumbia.travel. Contact : Antonia Robinson at Antonia@goshpr.co.uk.

Bramble Ski

High end ski operator Bramble Ski, has launched a new ski instructor-concierge service.

The ski instructor-concierges are fully qualified ski instructors who are especially trained to provide guests with the most enjoyable ski experience during their stay, both on and off the piste.

Bramble Ski is a luxury ski operator offering a collection of private properties in Switzerland and Austria.

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

Kangaroo Island, South Australia

Kangaroo Island, Australia's third-largest island, after Tasmania and Melville Island, lies in the state of South Australia 112 km (70 mi) south-west of Adelaide.

Once occupied by Australian Aborigines, it was resettled from the early 19th century onwards, at first casually by sealers and whalers, and then as part of the colony of South Australia from 1836.

Since then the island's economy has been principally agricultural, with a southern rock lobster fishery and with tourism growing in importance. The largest town is Kingscote.

The island has several nature reserves to protect the remnants of its natural vegetation and native animals, with the largest and best-known being Flinders Chase National Park at the western end.

Kangaroo Island Festival, South Australia

24 to 28 April 2014

The five-day Kangaroo Island Festival is a gastronomic celebration featuring 15 dining events created to capture the true spirit and character of Kangaroo Island.

Highlights include the Big Day Out featuring interactive cooking displays and competitions, live entertainment and market stalls. Other options include joining locals for a home-cooked meal and Table Surfing with a group of friends or dining al fresco at a collection of pop-up and wilderness events staged around the Island.

There is also the chance to meet the Island's food, wine and spirits producers at exclusive Meet the Maker soirees, coffee breaks and tastings.

Visit : www.tourkangarooisland.com.au and www.uk.southaustralia.com. Contact : Jovanka Ristich at Jovanka@ipr-online.co.uk.

Urban Adventures

Global day tour company, Urban Adventures has extended its range of free travel apps with the release of new city guides for Siem Reap and Phnom Penh.

There are now Urban Adventures Treasure Apps for 14 cities, including :

Melbourne	Los Angeles	Rio de Janeiro, and
Toronto	Florence	Lisbon.
Berlin	Paris	
Amsterdam	Hanoi	The next addition to the range
Prague	New York City	will be Sydney.

Urban Adventures provide to 265 tours in 90 destinations around the world.

Visit : www.urbanadventures.com/urban_adventures_apps. Contact : Nicola Frame at pr@urbanadventures.com.

The National Park Service, USA

The National Park Service is comprised of 401 areas covering more than 84 million acres in every state, territory and the District of Columbia.

These areas include national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails and the White House.

The National Park Service celebrates its centennial in 2016 and will be staging a year long programme of events, activities and initiatives.

Visit : www.nps.gov. Contact : Mike_Litterst@nps.gov.

Cataract Canyon, Utah

Cataract Canyon is a 46-mile (74 km) long canyon of the Colorado River located within Canyonlands National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in Utah.

Those choosing to raft this stretch of the Colorado River experience signature runs of world-class rapids that rival Grand Canyon counterparts.

Canyonlands National Park offers excellent hiking. However, due to the rugged terrain and inaccessibility of much of the park's 257,000 acres, one of the best ways to explore is by river.

Western River Expeditions is an adventure travel company escorts guests down rivers on professionally guided rafting trips in Utah, Idaho and Arizona.

Visit : www.westernriver.com. Contact : Dave Wiggins at dave@travelnewssource.com.

Indonesia

The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism has revealed plans to develop 561 tourism villages in 2014.

The project will span 19 provinces and is designed to help visitors discover traditional life at local Indonesian villages, where residents maintain indigenous cultures and live as their ancestors did.

Among the tourism villages being developed is Kembangarum in Yogyakarta, one of the leading cultural regions of Java.

Spread throughout Indonesia, traditional villages offer the chance to explore places where age-old beliefs, rituals and practices still dominate daily life.

The Republic of Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world, comprising more than 17,000 tropical islands fringed with white sandy beaches. Among the most well-known islands are :

- Bali
- Java
- Kalimantan (formerly Borneo)
- Papua
- Sulawesi (formerly Celebes)
- Sumatra, and the Maluku Islands (better known as Moluccas).

Visit : www.tourism-indonesia.co.uk. Contact : Sarah Habicht at sarah@humewhitehead.co.uk.

The Arctic wilderness of Greenland

Natural Habitat Adventures, the nature travel company, has introduced a new way to explore the Arctic wilderness of Greenland in 2015.

The centerpiece of the trip will be a four-night stay at Base Camp Greenland on Sermilik Fjord, the heart of a region known as the "Arctic Riviera" for its many dry, sunny summer days. Guests will go whale watching, sea kayaking, hiking, and visit traditional Inuit villages.

Visit : www.nathab.com. Contact : Ted Martens at tedm@nathab.com.

Naturewise Eco Escapes, Victoria, Australia

A selection of new group holiday experiences from Naturewise Eco Escapes allows participants to experience Victoria while a personal contribution to the conservation of the state's natural assets.

Developed in partnership with Conservation Volunteers Australia and Parks Victoria, the tours showcase the beauty of the state's natural assets while allowing visitors to work alongside park rangers and specialist researchers to support activities including remote camera monitoring work, bird research, animal trapping and spotlight surveys.

Visit : www.naturewise.com.au. Contact : Rosie Beaumont-Thomas at rosie.beaumontthomas@fourbgb.com.

What's on in 2014

Diamonds Are Forever, the Museum of Ventura County, California

2 May to 24 August 2014

Diamonds Are Forever will highlight history's most famous diamonds and their equally famous owners,

The exhibit will feature the well-known diamond replicas of Scott Sucher and the stunning Historical Figures of artist-historian George Stuart.

Over the centuries many of the world's largest diamonds have taken fascinating journeys from the mines of India, Africa and South America to the coffers of the rich and powerful.

For 400 years, these very special gems have been part of the royal treasuries of Europe.

Many priceless diamonds, including the Cullinan, Koh-i-Noor, Orlov, and Beau Sancy, have been permanently mounted in the crown jewels of France, England and Russia.

Many other exquisite diamonds have been snapped up by aristocrats, merchants and industrialists of Europe and America.

Scale replica diamonds by Scott Sucher and Historical Figures by George Stuart.

Visit : www.galleryhistoricalfigures.com. Contact : Ann Flowers at annflowercommunications@gmail.com.

Motor racing in Monaco

Historic Grand Prix

9 to 11 May 2014

The 72nd Historic Monaco Grand Prix gives classic cars the chance to race the Formula 1 Grand Prix circuit two weeks before the F1 race begins.

The biennial race always draws thousands of classic-car enthusiasts, eager to witness some of the 'old' Monaco take over the 'new'.

F1 Grand Prix

22 to 25 May

One of the most prestigious sporting events in the world, the Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix has been held annually since 1929.

Visit : www.visitmonaco.com. Contact : Paul Charles at Monaco@verypcc.com.

Nottinghamshire County Show, UK

10 and 11 May 2014

Located in the market town of Newark, the Nottinghamshire County Show is a traditional agricultural show promoting farming, food, rural life and heritage, which attracts around 50,000 visitors a year.

It offers dog displays and show jumping and the traditional equine and livestock showing classes

The town of Newark itself has the ruins of Newark Castle and the chance to consider the English Civil War when the Castle was badly damaged due to its key position on the banks of the River Trent.

A Civil War Trail is also available from the nearby tourist information centre.

Visit : www.nottinghamshirecountyshow.com. Contact : Linda Parker at linda.parker@experiencenottinghamshire.com.

The Palau fishing derby

10 and 11 May 2014

The 24th Palau Sports Fishing Tournament will take place between 10 and 11 May 2014 in Palau, Micronesia.

Prizes range from \$100.00 to \$30,000.00 in a total of five categories of fish, including Billfish, Tuna, Wahoo, Barracuda/Spanish Macerel and Mahi.

Located in the westernmost corner of Micronesia, Palau is an archipelago of more than 586 islands with about 20,000 inhabitants and was the world's first official Shark Sanctuary.

Visit : www.visit-palau.com. Molly Blaisdell at molly@hooklineandthinker.com.

Festival of Museums, Scotland

16 to 18 May 2014

The Festival of Museums will take place in museums across Scotland including: Edinburgh, Glasgow, Falkirk, Stirling, Inverness, Aberdeen, Perth & Kinross, Fife, Angus & Dundee, Highlands, Dumfries & Galloway and Argyll & Bute.

Events range from hands-on workshops exploring the mysteries of DNA at the *Dundee Science Centre*, to an amateur baking contest that will produce cakes in the style of Charles Rennie Mackintosh at *Kelvingrove Art Gallery & Museum in Glasgow*.

In Perth, First World War re-enactors will come to life at *The Black Watch Castle & Museum*, while visitors can become an experimental archaeologist for the day and re-live the Iron Age over at the city's Scottish Crannog Centre.

Scotland Street School Museum in Glasgow will see the venue turn into a giant gaming centre offering a variety of traditional British and international games, and in Edinburgh, visitors can also learn about the medical advances that took place during the 1940s with the curator of the *University of Edinburgh's Anatomy Collection*.

Visit : www.festivalofmuseums.com. Contact : Kirsty Anderson at festivalofmuseums@grayling.com.

Soul Beach Festival, Aruba, the Caribbean

21-26 May 2014

The Soul Beach is a music festival over the Memorial Day holiday weekend, including concerts, comedy nights and day and night parties.

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

Melbourne Good Beer Week, Australia

23 to 25 May 2015

The Great Australasian Beer SpecTAPular is an annual festival at the centre of Good Beer Week.

The event will feature more than 250 beers from 130 breweries over three days, as well as gourmet street food, a fromagerie, live entertainment, brewery and industry stands and free educational seminars.

This year's event will see brews incorporating peanut butter, rice, spiced rocket leaves, blueberries, apricots and toasted coconut.

Visit : www.gabsfestival.com.au and www.visitmelbourne.com. Contact : Rosie Beaumont-Thomas at rosie.beaumont-thomas@fourbgb.com.

The Milk (cycle) Race, Old Market Square, Nottingham UK

24 and 25 May 2014

The Milk Race will span two days, with a festival of music and entertainment on Saturday 24 May and the main event, including two elite races, taking place on Sunday 25 May.

Visit : www.themilkrace.com. Contact : Linda Parker at linda.parker@experiencenottinghamshire.com.

The Australia & New Zealand Festival of Literature & Arts, King's College, London

29 May - 1 June 2014

The first Australia & New Zealand Festival of Literature & Arts will stage 50 events showcasing up to 80 writers, artists, academics and journalists from Australia and New Zealand.

Visit : lhmaera.com. www.ausnznfestival.com. Contact : Rosie Beaumont-Thomas at rosie.beaumont-thomas@fourbgb.com.

London Wine Week, London UK

2 to 8 June 2014

The first London Wine Week hopes to decode the wine list and give you new confidence and knowledge when ordering.

It will be a seven day celebration of the capital's flourishing wine scene with events staged in some of London's finest bars and restaurants.

The festival will help visitor discover new grapes, varieties and vintages usually unavailable by the glass.

There will be the chance to buy a wristband for £10 and take on of the festival wine tours. Wristband wearers will also qualify for premium wines by the glass and taster wine flights for £5 each. There will also be a pocket-sized guidebook mapping out the venues taking part.

The festival will also be championing the independent wine merchants and there will be a full schedule of ticketed events.

Visit : www.londonwineweek.com. Contact : Siobhan Payne at siobhan@londonwineweek.com.

The Gate to Southwell Folk Festival 2014, Southwell, Nottinghamshire UK

5 to 8 June 2014

The picturesque town of Southwell hosts an annual folk festival with live concerts, folk dancing displays and a real ale and cider festival.

Visit : www.southwellfolkfestival.org.uk. Contact : Carly Jones at carly.jones@experiencenottinghamshire.com.

Bushmills Live 2014, Ireland

11 and 12 June 2014

Bushmills Live is an annual festival of handcrafted whiskey and music at the Old Bushmills Distillery on Ireland's stunning north coast.

This year the festival, will see 700 whiskey and music fans invited to the brand's home to witness emerging and iconic artists sharing the stage for a series of intimate gigs in age-old buildings, where the art of making whiskey has been perfected over centuries.

Visit : www.bushmills.com. Contact : Claire Lorimer at claire.lorimer@smartscommunicate.com.

Dera Gai (St John's Day), Aruba, the Caribbean

24 June 2014

Aruba's harvest festival is a cultural celebration featuring traditional song and dance. The symbol of the rooster and bright yellow and red costumes are central to event held at various locations.

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

Bannockburn Live, Scotland

28-29 June 2014

Bannockburn Live a two day festival of music, culture, ancestry, food and drink and battle performances.

Over 300 Celtic and folk music performers will take part in the one-off festival to commemorate the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn.

The Battlefield and medieval encampments will recreate the Battle of Bannockburn and the life and times of 1314.

Visit : www.bannockburnlive.com. Contact : Glenda Rothead at Glenda.Rothead@visitscotland.com.

Here is My Home, Lithuania

28 June to 4 July 2014

Here is My Home, Lithuania's main cultural event for 2014, is promoted as the Lithuanian Cultural Olympics.

Originating from the end of the 19th century, the Lithuanian song festival is now a huge event held every four years and brings together thousands of professional and amateur musicians, singers and dancers, from all over the world.

Year round events in Lithuania include :

- Mardi Gras in February
- Vilnius International Film Festival in March
- the International Jazz Festival in April
- the International Contemporary Dance Festival "New Baltic Dance" and Street Music Day in May
- the Medieval Festival in Trakai Peninsular Castle in June
- the Cultural Night, Let it be the Night' in July, and
- the Vilnius Marathon in September and the "Christopher Christmas" music concerts in December,.

Lithuania is the southernmost country of the three Baltic States and has a 90km coastline along the Baltic Sea.

Summers are generally warm with temperatures up to 30°C. Winters are cold with easterly winds bringing temperatures down to as low as -12°C. Spring and autumn are mild and there is normally snow cover for two months of the year.

Visit: www.dainusvente.lt/en/programme and www.Lithuania.travel. Contact : Cindy Landlust at lithuania@representationplus.co.uk.

28th Aruba International Triathlon

29 June 2014

International competitors participate in a triathlon comprised of a 1.5km swim, 40km bike race and a 10km run.

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

Reasons to write about

Berlin's World War II story with the Berlin Pass

Seventy-five years after the outbreak of hostilities, World War II still plays a big part in the tourism experiences of the German capital Berlin.

From €74 for an adult two-day pass, Berlin Pass customers will gain entry at exhibitions and museums unique to Berlin, including the Historiale Berlin Museum, the Anne Frank Centre and the Jewish Museum Berlin.

All help to reveal WWII history through one-of-a-kind original artefacts, state-of-the-art exhibitions, or interactive installations.

A sightseeing city tour, free to Berlin Pass customers, takes in important sites such as the Alexanderplatz and the Brandenburg Gate, both of which were heavily damaged by Allied bombing, and later rebuilt.

The pass also includes participation in fascinating guided walking tours which explore the city's wartime story in depth, as well as free entry to over 50 top museums, sights and landmarks, including :

Key sites for those looking to explore Berlin's wartime story include:

Jewish Museum Berlin

Discover the Holocaust and the experiences of Jewish citizens in Nazi Germany.

Exhibitions "Two Millennia of German Jewish History" and "A Time For Everything – Rituals Against Forgetting" house artefacts, photographs and installations, exploring Germany's past through the eyes of Jewish people.

World War II Walking Tour with Insider Tours

The chance to explore the remains of the 'Thousand Year Reich' on a walking tour including visits to the bombed-out Memorial Church, a poignant symbol of Allied bombing of Berlin, the route of the Soviet advance towards the final battle for the Reichstag and the exact location of the Führer Bunker.

Also free with the Berlin Pass are alternative Insider Tours focusing on the destruction and re-birth of Jewish Berlin and a moving memorial tour of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, the model for subsequent camps across Eastern Europe.

Historiale Berlin Museum

Ceiling-high photographs lead visitors through the museum's permanent exhibition which explores the history and development of Berlin through the years, including the rise of Hitler and Nazi Germany in the 1930s through to the end of World War II.

Visit : www.visitberlin.de/en and www.berlinpass.com. Contact : David Ezra at david.ezra@kbc-pr.com.

Balinese New Year

Bali is an island and the smallest province of Indonesia, and includes a few smaller neighbouring islands, notably Nusa Penida.

It is located at the westernmost end of the Lesser Sunda Islands, between Java to the west and Lombok to the east, and has its capital of Denpasar at the southern part of the island.

Bali is an island steeped in tradition with the Balinese New Year running from 29 to 31 March.

The three-day celebration begins carnival style on 29 March with processions and parades before concluding with a day of absolute silence, contemplation and meditation on 31 March.

Tawur Agung Kesanga, or the Day of the Dead Moon on 30 March sees locals converge on village squares to give offerings to huge papier-mâché gargoyles known as the ogoh-ogoh, designed to frighten away evil spirits.

Traditional gamelan music, firecrackers and partying continues throughout the night, ending just before sunrise with the torching of the ogoh-ogohs, which is seen as a final symbolic gesture to be rid of the evil spirits for the year ahead.

Nyepi follows on 31 March with absolute silence and contemplation for 24 hours, with the idea that when the evil spirits descend, they will decide that Bali is uninhabited and leave the island alone for another year.

Alila Hotels & Resorts' four Bali retreats offer Nyepi packages, for guests who want to journey to the heart of the celebrations and experience a slice of Balinese tradition.

Visit : www.balitourismboard.org and www.alilahotels.com. Contact : Paul Charles at alila@verypcc.com.

Bodrum, Turkey

The Halicarnassus of ancient times, the town of Bodrum on Turkey's Aegean coast is one of the Mediterranean's most enticing resorts.

Whitewashed houses cascade down the hillsides to two blue bays with the 15th-century Castle of St Peter standing on a spit of land between them.

Bodrum offers a mix of ancient, medieval and modern with historic monuments and fashionable bars to bougainvillea-draped alleyways.

Attractions also include a bazaar, the town's steamy 'hammams' and the gulet boat cruises on the turquoise Aegean.

Green Island Holidays has chosen two properties in Bodrum to feature in its 2014 brochure :

- Marmara Bodrum enjoys views over the town and the Aegean Sea from its main pool and terraces.
- El Vino overlooks St Peter's Castle and has panoramic views over Bodrum.

Visit : www.greenislandholidays.com. Contact : Ulku Dirioglu at greenisland@redmintcomms.co.uk.

A swim with a view

The Alila Ubud, Bali

The infinity pool at Alila Ubud, in the heart of Bali, is the centre piece of the resort giving the impression of being suspended over the jungle high above the Ayung river below.

Allila Ubud is a hillside retreat located close to Ubud, Bali's artistic cultural centre.

Visit : www.alilahotels.com/ubud.

Alila Villas Uluwatu, Bali

Alila Villas Uluwatu has a 50-metre infinity pool, located on a cliff edge with ocean views. Overlooking the infinity pool is the resort's Sunset Cabana Bar, also suspending over the cliff-side platform.

Visit : www.alilahotels.com/uluwatu.

Eagles Nest, New Zealand

Eagles Nest offers five luxury villas and what has been declared as one of the World's 10 Best Cliff Edge Pools. The 25-metre horizon-edge pool enjoys 320-degree views of the Bay of Islands.

Visit : www.eaglesnest.co.nz/villas.

Singita Pamushana, Zimbabwe

Singita Pamushana, which is located in the south east of Zimbabwe, enjoys views over the Malilangwe dam and sandstone hills.

Its infinity pool has views of the Malilangwe Wildlife Reserve and the chance to spot rare and endangered wildlife, such as the roan and sable antelope, the highest concentration of black rhinos and fourteen species of eagles.

Visit : www.singita.com.

Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc, Cap d'Antibes, France

The iconic heated seawater infinity swimming pool at Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc resembles a giant mirror overflowing from the cliff along the rugged Cap d'Antibes coast just outside Cannes. A swim in pool offers views out to Lérins Islands and Cannes Bay.

The Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc is acknowledged as one of the most beautiful properties in Europe.

Visit : www.hotel-du-cap-eden-roc.com.

Le Bristol, Paris, France

Located on the sixth floor and opening on to a vast sundeck, the swimming pool at Le Bristol has uninterrupted views across the Paris rooftops, to Montmartre, Sacre-Coeur and the Eiffel Tower.

Visit : www.lebristolparis.com.

Monastero Santa Rosa, Amalfi Coast, Italy

Launched in May 2012, Monastero Santa Rosa is a boutique hotel and luxury spa set on Italy's iconic Amalfi Coast. The hotel's heated infinity pool is situated on the Cape d'Orso's cliff edge has sea views and seems to 'fall off the cliff'.

Visit : www.monasterosantarosa.com.

Contact : sr@verypcc.com.

Sports museums in Baltimore

The Sports Legends Museum

The Sports Legends Museum, located next to Oriole Park at Camden Yards features *Images We Remember*, a 54-picture exhibit of some of the photography taken by famed photographer Neil Leifer.

On display through October 2014, the photographs include the historic image of Muhammad Ali standing over Sonny Liston after knocking him down during their heavyweight match in Lewiston, Maine and a collection of Sport Illustrated covers.

The Babe Ruth Birthplace & Museum

The Babe Ruth Birthplace & Museum, also in Camden Yards, has personal artefacts of the baseball star including a 1927 baseball bat, his personal rosary, a marriage certificate of his first marriage, a Babe Ruth Rookie Card currently worth \$700,000.

The museum's latest exhibit, "O' Say Can you See: The Star Spangled Banner in Sports," looks at the link between baseball, the national anthem and Babe Ruth.

In addition to these sports museums :

- the city features two sports stadiums within walking distance to the Inner Harbor, including Oriole Park at Camden Yards which recently celebrated its 20th anniversary and still serves as the model for new ballparks.
- Baltimore hosts the Preakness Stakes, the second leg of thoroughbred racing's Triple Crown on the third Saturday in May each year
- The city is also home to the Lacrosse Hall of Fame
- the Baltimore Ravens were named after Edgar Allan Poe's poem, "The Raven." Poe lived in Baltimore, died there in 1849 and is buried at Baltimore's Westminster Hall.

Visit : www.baltimore.org/sports. Contact : Sarah Straub at sarah.straub@finnpartners.com.

Golf in the Calvia region of Majorca

Calvia, located in the South West region of Majorca, is one of the main golfing centres in Europe. Visitors can play one of the three established courses in the region, and another seventeen just a short drive away in other areas of Majorca.

Real Golf de Bendinat

The 18 hole Real Golf de Bendinat golf course is located in the heart of the Bendinat complex and offers sea views of the bay of Palma with lush green mountains.

Hotel Bonsol offers a seven night stay in a classic double room on a B&B basis including three rounds of golf and buggy hire.

Visit : www.realgolfbendinat.com and www.hotelbonsol.es.

Golf de Poniente

Considered to be one of Mallorca's best designed golf courses, Golf de Poniente opened in 1978 and is the product of Mallorca architect, Pepe Gancedo. The 18-hole, 6430m, par 72 course, combines woodland, Mediterranean flora, seven lakes, sweeping terrain, wide fairways and quick greens.

The four star Son Caliu Hotel Spa Oasis offers a seven night package including a buffet breakfast, free spa entrance and five green fees at either Real Golf Bendinat, Poniente Golf or Santa Ponsa.

Visit : www.ponientegolf.com and www.soncaliu.com.

Golf Santa Ponsa 1

Host of the European Tour six times, Golf Santa Ponsa 1 was the Calvia region's first golf course and the second in Majorca.

Located in the four star Golf Santa Ponsa Resort, which has three exclusive golf courses, Santa Ponsa 1 is the only one open to the general public.

Visit : www.hotelgolfsantaponsa.com.

Calvia also offers six well-established resorts (Magaluf, Palmanova, Portal Nous, Illetes, Santa Ponca and Peguera) which are all situated approximately 20 minutes from Palma de Mallorca airport.

Visitors can also enjoy cycling and hiking in the region, as well as the rich culture and history.

Visit : www.visitcalvia.com. Contact : Jo Thomas at jo.thomas@kbctravelgroup.com.

The 125th anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's death in 2015

On 29 July 2015 it will be exactly 125 years since

Vincent van Gogh (born 1853) died on 29 July 1890 and, to mark the 125th anniversary of his death, the Van Gogh Europe Foundation, is to stage '125 years of inspiration'.

Activities will be organised throughout 2015 in the towns in Holland, Belgium, France and England that featured in the life and work of the artist.

Among the initiatives :

Van Gogh in the Borinage

From 24 January to 17 May 2015 the Mons 2015 Foundation, as European Capital of Culture will stage the exhibition Van Gogh in the Borinage, the birth of an artist in the BAM Museum (Museum of Fine Arts).

During his stay of almost two years in the Borinage (1878-1880) Vincent van Gogh ended his career as a preacher and chose to become an artist.

About 70 paintings and drawings from various international collections will be on display in this exhibition, including major loans from the Van Gogh Museum and the Kröller-Müller Museum.

Van Gogh & Co

Van Gogh & Co will be held in the Kröller-Müller Museum from 25 April to 27 September.

The exhibition will concentrate on the traditional genres at the end of the 19th century: still life, vista/perspective, nature, cityscape and portrait.

Fifty works by Van Gogh from various periods will be combined with those of his contemporaries from the museum's own collection.

The North Brabant Museum (Het Noordbrabants Museum)

The North Brabant Museum (Het Noordbrabants Museum) is in discussion with the internationally acclaimed artist, designer, entrepreneur and pioneer Daan Roosegaarde (b.1979) about an exhibition (June to August 2015) inspired by Van Gogh.

The Van Gogh Museum

The Van Gogh Museum will stage an exhibition Munch : Van Gogh (25 September 2015 to 17 January 2016).

Both Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch (1863-1946) are known for their emotionally charged paintings and drawings, their personal and innovative styles and lives filled with hardship. Apart from these larger museum projects other activities are being planned, which are inspired by Van Gogh's life and work.

The full programme will be announced later this year.

Van Gogh Europe Foundation

Four organisations form the basis of the Van Gogh Europe Foundation: the Van Gogh Museum, the Kröller-Müller Museum, Van Gogh Brabant and Mons 2015, European Capital of Culture.

Under this collective name of Van Gogh Europe they form the core of collaboration between about 30 organisations in Holland, Belgium, France and England which are actively engaged in promoting Van Gogh's heritage.

Contact : Simone Sagi at ssagi@holland.com.

Silver Discoverer

Silversea's third expedition ship, Silver Discoverer, will launch on 2 April 2014 with voyage itineraries to :

- Micronesia
- Melanesia
- Polynesia
- East Asia and Russian Far East
- Southeast Asia
- The Kimberley region of North-West Australia, and
- New Zealand Sub-Antarctic.

Silver Discoverer's cruises will include:

Kimanis Bay, Malaysia

The small, unpopulated island in Kimanis Bay, off the Western coast of Malaysia, is famous for its active mud "volcanoes" at the highest part of the island.

The mineral-rich mud is thought to have therapeutic properties and visitors are encouraged to slather themselves in it before diving into the ocean for a dip.

The Tun Sakaran Marine Park, Borneo

The Tun Sakaran Marine Park (also known as the Semporna Islands Park), lies 20 kilometres off the Semporna mainland.

It is the largest marine park in Sabah and boasts the greatest concentration of coral reefs in Malaysia.

Guests have a diving opportunity with a Silversea marine biologist as well as the Bajau Laut (sea gypsies), the indigenous nomadic tribe of boat dwellers.

The Bay of Islands, New Zealand

The Bay of Islands is a dynamic, sub-tropical region which is made up of 144 Islands fringed by bush land and punctuated by the occasional village.

Samba, Indonesia

The island of Sumba has resisted the advances of the modern age making it a fascinating island to explore, especially West Sumba where ancient tribal rites are best preserved.

White Island, New Zealand

New Zealand's White Island is unique in that 70% of its volcanic activity remains under the sea, making this massive volcanic structure the largest in New Zealand.

Guests will be guided through the history of the volcanic formations, whilst viewing the surreal spectacles: hissing fumaroles, lava bombs, yellow sulphur crystals, bubbling mud pots and a steaming lake.

Visit : www.silversea.com. Contact: Katie Francis at silversea@verypcc.com.

A place to stay

Luxury lodges in New Zealand

Annandale, Pigeon Bay

Located amid a rugged landscape of hills and bays on the Banks Peninsula, an hour's drive from the city of Christchurch, Annandale is rural New Zealand.

The 4,000-acre sheep and cattle farm in Pigeon Bay lies in a spectacular coastal location.

The historic farm features a restored five-bedroom homestead with gardens and three private villas.

The location offers 4WD farm tours, mountain biking and hiking, guided kayaking, paddle boarding, sailing and fishing charters.

The waters of the peninsula are also home to the famed Hector's dolphins, the smallest dolphin in the world.

Visit : www.annandale.com.

Matakauri Lodge, Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown

The Matakauri Lodge is a four-suite cottage on the shores of Queenstown's Lake Wakatipu with views of the Remarkable Mountains.

Visit : www.matakauri.co.nz/owners-cottage

The Lodge at Walter Peak Station, Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown

Part of the historic sheep station founded in 1860, the newly launched Lodge at Walter Peak Station is located on the south shore of Lake Wakatipu.

The area offers farm tours, mountain biking, hiking and fishing, clay bird shooting and heli-skiing.

Visit : www.touchofspice.co.nz.

Visit : www.newzealand.com/travel/media. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

Blanket Bay, Queenstown, New Zealand

Blanket Bay on the shores of Lake Wakatipu was Ian McKellen's retreat during the filming of Lord of the Rings.

Visit : www.blanketbay.com and www.matakauri.co.nz. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

The Lodge at the Hills, Queenstown, New Zealand

The Lodge at the Hills has opened as part of the Hills Golf Course.

The six-room exclusive use lodge is located amid 500 acres and surrounded by glacial valleys and snow capped mountains.

Sir Michael Hill's private St Andrews inspired golf course is on the doorstep, and The Hills also has one of the largest private collections of early New Zealand Maori and contemporary Asian and New Zealand art and sculptures.

Visit : www.thehills.co.nz. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

The Kinloch Club, Lake Taupo, New Zealand

The Kinloch Club, located in 600 acres on the shores of Lake Taupo, will open a 5-star luxury lodge and 26 luxury villas in late 2014.

These will be situated around the par 72 championship Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course.

Operated in conjunction with the nearby Treetops Lodge and Estate, the new lodge will have panoramic views over Lake Taupo and the course.

Kinloch's lakefront has 3km of sandy beach and the area provides some of the best fishing in the world and the geothermal and Maori cultural heartland of Rotorua.

Visit : www.thekinlochclub.com. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

Castle accommodation in the UK

Ruthin Castle, Denbighshire, North Wales

Originally known as The Red Castle in the Great Marsh, Ruthin was constructed in the late 13th century by Dafydd, the brother of Prince Llywelyn.

Located in acres of parkland near the medieval town of Ruthin, the castle has its own dungeon, whipping pit and drowning pool.

Visit : www.ruthincastle.co.uk.

Chateau Rhianfa, Anglesey, North Wales

Built in 1849 by the Baronet of Bodelwyddan and his wife, Chateau Rhianfa was inspired by Loire Valley French Chateaus and retains the style today.

Now a grade II listed luxury 21-bedroom masterpiece, the chateau has turrets, wine caves and a grand banqueting hall and views over the Menai Strait.

Visit : www.amazingvenues.co.uk/venues/chateau-rhianfa/discover-chateau-rhianfa.

The Fortalice, Blairgowrie, Scotland

Originally built in 1560 as a fortified house to protect the Ogilvys of Airlie from marauders fighting religious battles, today

The Fortalice offers luxury rooms complete with four-poster beds, and a 'Great Hall', which is dominated by a vast log fire and exquisite hand painted ceiling.

Visit : www.statelyescapes.co.uk/scotland/the-fortalice.

Aldourie Castle, Inverness, Scotland

The historic Aldourie Castle is of Scottish Baronial style and the only habitable castle on the southern shores of the famous Loch Ness.

With turrets and towers, hidden doors, old family portraits and vast fireplaces, Aldourie is a medieval castle to the core.

Set within a 500 acre private estate, Aldourie is five miles from the city of Inverness and 30 minutes via car from Inverness airport.

Visit : www.aldouriecastle.co.uk.

Tulloch Castle Hotel, Ross-shire, Scotland

Dating from the 12th century, when only the Laird or Chief of the Clan could enjoy a stay in a Scottish highland castle, Tulloch retains many of its period features, including a 250-year old panelled Great Hall and restored original fireplaces and ceilings.

Visit : www.bespokehotels.com/tullochcastlehotel.

Crom Castle, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

Set in rolling parkland where Jacobite battles once raged, the Crom Estate in County Fermanagh is located in Northern Ireland's Lake District.

The historic seat of the Earls of Erne for over 350 years, the castle was designed by the English architect who was responsible for sections of Buckingham Palace.

Today, up to 12 guests can stay in the 6-bedroomed West Wing of the castle and dine beneath the spectacular barrel-vaulted ceiling in the former Billiard room.

Visit : www.cromcastle.com.

Dungiven Castle, Londonderry, Northern Ireland

Once the ancestral home of the O'Cahan clan, who ruled the area between the 12th and 17th Century, Dungiven Castle is steeped in history.

The song 'Danny Boy' is taken from a melody lamenting the passing of the last in the long line of O'Cahan chiefs; Chief Cooney-na-Gall, who is buried in the Old Priory just a few minutes' walk from the castle.

Today it is a family-run 4-star guest house.

Visit : www.dungivencastle.info.

Thornbury Castle, Cotswolds, West-Central England

Thornbury Castle offers the chance to spend the night in the Duke's Bedchamber where King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn slept 500 years ago.

Ornate Tudor architecture, sumptuous bedchambers with hanging tapestries, and historic walled gardens complete Thornbury Castle, which sits at the edge of the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire.

Visit : www.thornburycastle.co.uk.

Amberley Castle, West Sussex, Southern England

Hidden away for 900 years in the South Downs, Amberley Castle began life as a hunting lodge for the Bishops of Chichester.

Today guests can follow in the footsteps of royalty beneath the original portcullis and 18-meter walls, the same walked by one-time owner Queen Elizabeth I, who held the lease from 1588 to 1603.

Visit : www.amberleycastle.co.uk.

Langley Castle Hotel, Northumberland, North East England

Since its construction in 1350, during the reign of Edward III, Langley Castle has been associated with the turbulent history of the Kingdom.

During the 17th century the estate became the property of the Earls of Derwentwater, who took part in the Jacobite risings of 1715 and were executed at the Tower of London.

Now a luxurious hotel in its own ten acre woodland estate, the castle has retained its architectural integrity while allowing guests to enjoy four-poster beds and window seats set in the 7ft thick castle walls.

Visit : www.langleycastle.com.

Contact the VisitBritain Media Team at pressandpr@visitbritain.com.

Belmond

Belmond, which is owned and operated by Orient-Express Hotels, is a global collection of hotel and luxury travel adventures.

Established 40 years ago with the acquisition of Belmond Hotel Cipriani in Venice, the portfolio now embraces 45 hotel, rail and river cruise experiences.

The collection includes :

- Belmond Grand Hotel Europe, St. Petersburg
- Belmond Maroma Resort & Spa, Riviera Maya, and
- Belmond El Encanto, Santa Barbara

Belmond also encompasses safaris, six luxury tourist trains including the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and three river cruises.

Visit : www.belmond.com. Contact : Samantha Strawford at samantha.strawford@belmond.com.

21 Broad, Nantucket New England

Lark Hotels will open 21 Broad, its second Nantucket property, in July 2014.

It will be a totally renovated 27-room boutique hotel, dating from 1876 and located a minute's walk from the Steamship Authority and island restaurants.

21 Broad will be Lark Hotels' seventh coastal New England boutique hotel

Visit : www.larkhotels.com. Contact : Rebecca Widness at rebecca@widness-co-pr.com.

The Falcondale Hotel, Lampeter, Wales

The Falcondale Hotel and its 14-acres of pleasure gardens, is located just outside the university town of Lampeter and close to Cardigan Bay's beaches and the wild uplands of the Cambrian mountains.

The Italianate mansion offers 18 individually designed bedrooms.

Walkers can get away in the unspoilt Cambrian Mountains, or walk the coastal path to spot Cardigan Bay's famed porpoises, dolphins and seals.

The Falcondale restaurant has been awarded 2AA rosettes for seven years running.

Visit : www.thefalcondale.co.uk. Duncan Foulkes at duncan.foulkes@btinternet.com.

The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, Maldives

The new Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, which is located in the Noonu Atoll Maldives, has 221 luxury ocean-front villas, including 70 over-water bungalows, 11 bar and restaurant choices, a 20-room tropical spa, and range of activities and local explorations.

Visit : www.thesunsiyam.com. Contact : Kathryn Peel at Kathryn@ophirpr.co.uk.

Ellerman House, Cape Town

Ellerman House is a Cape Edwardian mansion located in the suburb of Bantry Bay, Cape Town.

Once the stately home of Sir John & Lady Ellerman, distinguished shipping magnates and investors, the now privately owned property has one of the most spectacular ocean views in South Africa, with a panorama of Atlantic coastline that includes the infamous Robben Island.

A member of the Relais & Chateaux collection, the mansion is a 5 minute walk to the Clifton and Camps Bay beaches and a 10- minute drive to the V&A Waterfront.

Visit : www.ellermanhouse.co.za. Contact : Charlie Fox at Charlie@grifcopr.com.

Eichardt's Private Hotel, Queenstown, New Zealand

Queenstown is known as a premier ski resorts and for a winter warmer stay in a lakeside location, Eichardt's Private Hotel is considered one of the best.

Recently voted the 'World's Best Luxury Ski Hotel' in the World Luxury Hotel Awards, Eichardt's Private Hotel has been on the site since the 1800's – starting life as a woolshed and becoming Eichardt's in 1869.

Visit : www.eichardts.com. Contact: Paul Charles at newzealand@verypcc.com.

Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, Southern California

The Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa is a Relais and Chateaux resort located in Rancho Santa Fe in Southern California.

Surrounded by bougainvillea, citrus groves and blue pools, it is also the number one tennis resort in Southern California with 18 world class tennis courts and a year round tennis programme and expert instruction.

Visit : www.ranchovalencia.com. Contact : Claire Mans at claire@masonrose.com.

Accommodation in Aruba

The Green Manchebo, Aruba

Luxury boutique hotel Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa has been again awarded Gold status by the Green Globe organisation.

A two-storey hotel, Manchebo is 10 minutes from downtown Oranjestad on Eagle Beach.

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

The Renaissance, Aru

The Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino has completed the renovation of its adult-only Renaissance Marina rooms to provide guests with what the property says is a new Caribbean experience.

During 2014, the 259 guest rooms at the Renaissance Ocean Suites will also be refurbished, with work scheduled for completion by mid-November.

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

The Aruba Marriott Resort, Aruba

The Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino has received the American Automobile Association (AAA) Four Diamond Award 2014.

Only 5.3 percent of the more than 29,000 hotels approved by AAA make the Four Diamond list.

Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, is located on Palm Beach, with all 411 guestrooms overlooking the Caribbean Sea.

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

The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi, Maldives

The Sun Siyam Iru Fushi is a beach resort located in the Noonu Atoll Maldives, a 40-minute seaplane journey from Male.

The resort features 221 ocean-front villas, including 70 over-water bungalows, 11 bar and restaurant choices, a 20-room tropical spa, and range of activities and local explorations.

The Sun Siyam portfolio of properties also includes :

- Olhuveli Beach & Spa Resort
- Vilu Reef Beach & Spa
- Beach House Iruveli, all in the Maldives, and
- the Beach House Pasikudah opening in Sri Lanka in 2014.

Visit : www.thesunsiyam.com/irufushi. Contact : Kathryn Peel at Kathryn@ophirpr.co.uk.

The Little Nell, Aspen. Colorado

The Little Nell is Aspen's only 5 star ski-in, ski-out hotel located at the base of Aspen Mountain in the heart of downtown.

This Forbes five star and AAA five diamond hotel is open year-round and has innovative winter and summer activities.

Visit : www.thelittlenell.com. Contact : Katie O'Lone at katie@masonrose.com.

Hilton Hotels, Western Australia

DoubleTree by Hilton Perth Waterfront

The new DoubleTree by Hilton Perth Waterfront, opening mid-2016, will be located at 351 Riverside Drive, Perth adjoining Barrack Square and fronting the Swan River.

The 241-room hotel will have views of the Swan River and will include a restaurant, bar, executive lounge, business centre, gym, pool and event spaces.

DoubleTree by Hilton Fremantle

The DoubleTree by Hilton Fremantle, opening in 2017, will be located at Point Street, Fremantle, overlooking Princess May Park and central to the “Cappuccino Strip” of South Terrace.

The hotels will join Hilton Worldwide’s existing portfolio of 20 hotels in Australasia.

About DoubleTree By Hilton

DoubleTree By Hilton has a collection of 370 upscale hotels in gateway cities, metropolitan areas and vacation destinations across 32 countries and six continents.

Visit : www.Hilton.com. Contact : Anita Clements at anita@hamilton-pr.com.

Casa Gangotena, Quito Old Town, Ecuador

Casa Gangotena, a boutique 31-bedroom hotel in the heart of Quito, has funded the work of the “San Roque Heritage Guardians” NGO.

The Caminos de San Roque programme created by this partnership offers guests guided tours of the San Roque neighbourhood, which lies a little beyond the usual tourist sites.

Hotel guests are also invited to join the hotel's chef, Chef Dávila, as he navigates his way around the bustling market in search of produce for his daily dishes.

Visit : www.casagangotena.com. Contact : Steele Paulich at Steele.Paulich@brightergroup.com.

Maroma Resort, the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico

the Maroma Resort on Mexico’s Mayan Riviera gives guests the chance to explore the natural wonders of the Yucatan Peninsula on a scuba dive among the Cenotes.

The Cenotes are unique to Mexico and were held sacred by the Mayans.

Created by an underground river system, the stalactites and stalagmites are found within freshwater sinkholes and are natural works of art.

Set among rustling palms and lush greenery, The Maroma Resort offers suites and a private villa opening onto a white-sand beach.

Visit : www.maromahotel.com. Contact : Steele Paulich at Steele.Paulich@brightergroup.com

An Alliance special supplement : Christchurch, New Zealand

Christchurch, on New Zealand's South Island, and the gateway to the Canterbury region is being highlighted as a 'city reimagined' three years after an earthquake devastated the centre of the city.

Great efforts are being made to establish Christchurch as one of the country's most vibrant and creative hubs, as a passionate population work to rebuild and recreate their city.

The arts scene

With many galleries and art spaces temporarily closed after the earthquake, exhibitions were shown in makeshift galleries in people's homes, garages and purpose built modular Art Boxes around the city.

As a result, Christchurch is now home to some of the most exciting public art events in New Zealand.

FESTA 2014

25 to 27 October 2014

The free annual Festival of Transitional Architecture will be held again this October over Labour Day Weekend with a range of interventions, events, talks, tours, projects and public participation.

Visit : www.festa.org.nz.

Art Central

Completed in Autumn 2013, as an arts hub, the Art Central will be the centerpiece of a new trail of 11 temporary public artworks and two permanent pieces stretching from the Botanic gardens to St Asaph Street, with features including a sheltered courtyard, café and stage for events.

Art can also be seen in temporary spaces around the city, from the rooftop of C1 Espresso to the 10m suspended sculpture bridging the gap between Cathedral Square and the new Transitional Cathedral

The Gap Filler creative regeneration project

The Gap Filler creative regeneration project started after the earthquake to temporarily activate vacant sites within Christchurch, with everything from pedal powered cinemas to Gap Golf.

The innovations continue in 2014 with a number of new and returning projects:

Trams back on tracks

The first of Christchurch's iconic trams went 'back on the tracks' in late 2013.

Newly fitted with screens and AV content showcasing the history and future plans for Christchurch, the heritage trams are travelling on new city routes.

Visit : www.tram.co.nz.

The 'cardboard' cathedral

The transitional 'cardboard' cathedral, designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, opened in August 2013, forming a new attraction in the 'city of churches'.

Designed to last just 50 years, the cathedral is also being used for regular concerts and events throughout 2014

Visit : www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz.

New Avon River Park

Work has begun on the creation of a new river park that will form a green ribbon through Christchurch.

Set to feature cycle ways, riverside pedestrian walks and boardwalk areas alongside open theatre, recreation and restaurant areas, the project is also working to create a healthy river ecosystem. The first Watermark stage opened in late 2013.

Visit : www.ccd.govt.nz.

Hassle Free Tours

Hassle Free Tours offer 'Discover Christchurch' tours on an hourly, daily basis aboard a red London bus.

Visit : www.hasslefreetours.co.nz.

Transitional Audio city tour

The free one hour 40 minute audio tours around the transitional city have been revamped to offer visitors an insight into the ever changing cityscape.

They provide a commentary of personal stories and historical and contemporary geographical and architectural information to a soundscape from local musicians.

Visit : www.gapfiller.org.nz.

Dining and nightlife

From refurbished shipping containers to converted buses, Christchurch's CBD is growing its exciting range of innovative bars, restaurants and nightlife as business moves back into the city centre.

The bar scene around Victoria street is thriving again and the café and shopping precinct in New Regent Street has swung back into life.

New areas such as The Tannery, a development of boutique shopping, restaurants and bars, is a showcase just outside the city for independent businesses.

Visit : www.christchurchnz.com and www.newzealand.com. Contact : Louise Ferrall at newzealand@verypcc.com.

An Alliance special supplement : Toronto, Canada

Toronto, Canada

Toronto, the provincial capital of Ontario, is located in Southern Ontario on the north western shore of Lake Ontario.

Reasons to write about Toronto in 2014 include :

WorldPride 2014 Toronto

20 to 29 June 2014

WorldPride 2014 Toronto will feature ten days of celebration where streets turn into parades and parks into parties.

This was the first officially designated WorldPride to be held in North America.

Visit : www.worldpridetoronto.com.

Where to sleep

Twenty hotels are now operating in the city centre with over 1800 new hotel rooms expanding the accommodation offering.

These will be needed as Christchurch builds up to host major events including the opening match of the Cricket World Cup in February 2015.

New openings include:

Hotel 115

This 30-room boutique hotel opened late 2013.

Visit : www.hotel115.co.nz.

The 5-star Boutique Hotel Montreal

The Boutique Hotel Montreal will open in July 2014. The 27 room property on Cranmer Street will be the second 5 -star hotel in the city.

Visit : www.chateaublancchristchurch.com.

Grand Hotel Chancellor

Grand Hotels International will open a new hotel on Chancel Street in late 2015.

Visit : www.ghihotels.com.

Wahlburgers

Wahlburgers, the U.S.-based burger concept will open its first location outside of the US in Toronto in summer 2014.

Visit : www.wahlburgers.ca.

Taste of Toronto

24 to 27 July 2014

Taste of Toronto features specially-created menus, live food demonstrations, chef Q&As, interactive cooking classes, expert wine tastings and live music.

Visit : www.tasteoftoronto.com.

Toronto Zoo

Toronto Zoo will open a new Zip Line Ride over the Tundra Trek in the spring of 2014.

The Tundra has animals including arctic wolves, polar bears and caribou.

Visit : www.torontozoo.com.

Canada's Wonderland

A 4D ride experience called "Wonder Mountain's Guardian" will open at Canada's Wonderland in May 2014. Riders will encounter mythical creatures as they navigate 1,000 feet of coaster track through a desolate forest, underground lake and Draconian City.

Visit : www.canadaswonderland.com.

The Ontario Science Centre

The newly opened AstraZeneca Human Edge permanent exhibition hall at Toronto's Ontario Science Centre explores the wonders of the human body.

The Science of Rock 'N' Roll is an interactive exhibition that provides a look at the history of rock from the perspective of science and technology.

Visit : www.ontariosciencecentre.ca.

Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum

The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors has opened at Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum. Visitors will be taken into the Forbidden City's most private quarters, explaining the lives of the people who lived within the very imposing, very private, imperial enclave.

There will be displays of the objects they used and official accounts of their lives, of the emperors, their families, court officials, concubines, and eunuchs.

Visit : www.rom.on.ca.

Tourism Toronto

Tourism Toronto, Toronto's Convention and Visitors Association, is an industry association of more than 1,100 members established to sell and market the greater Toronto region as a remarkable destination for tourists, convention delegates and business travellers around the globe.

Tourism Toronto operates in partnership with the Greater Toronto Hotel Association and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

Visit : www.seetorontonow.com. Contact : Cass Helstrip at cass.helstrip@whitetigerpr.com.

The Stanley Kubrick exhibition

The Stanley Kubrick exhibition will open in Toronto in the fall of 2014.

It is the first exhibition dedicated to the life and work of film maker and will draw on extensive archives from Kubrick's home and workplace and features rare photographs and letters, original props and costumes, screenplays, production materials, and cameras from his 50-year career.

Visit : www.tiff.net.

The Aga Khan Museum

The Aga Khan Museum, which opens in Toronto in the fall of 2014, will be dedicated to the acquisition, preservation and display of artefacts relating to the intellectual, cultural, artistic and religious heritage of Islamic communities.

Visit : www.akdn.org/museum.

Delta Toronto Hotel

The Delta Toronto Hotel at Southcore Financial Centre opens at the end of 2014.

Visit : www.deltahotels.com

Casa Loma

The Liberty Entertainment Group has taken over Casa Loma, Canada's Majestic Castle.

The former home of Canadian financier Sir Henry Pellatt, Canada's foremost castle has decorated suites, secret passages, an 800-foot tunnel, towers, stables and 5-acre estate gardens.

The new owners plan to make improvements to the facility, enhance the special events and dining experience and integrate new technology for school and cultural programming.

Visit : www.CasaLoma.org.

Travel guides

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

AA Travel Guides

Visit : 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

Berlitz

www.berlitzpublishing.com.

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. Contact : 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 furqan.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

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. Contact : Geoffrey Chesler at geoffreychesler@btinternet.com.

Morris Communications

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

Odyssey Books & Guides

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

Oxygen Books city-lit

www.oxygenbooks.co.uk Malcom Burgess at malcolm@oxygenbooks.co.uk

Rough Guides

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

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