

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



HILARY NANGLE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

CHECK IN

SMALL JEWEL IN THE SNOW

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland — St. Moritz conjures images of palatial hotels, gourmet restaurants, designer shops, and snow sports enthusiasts decked out in fur-trimmed designer duds. But tucked into a nature reserve just a stone's throw from the tony downtown is Hotel and Restaurant Lej da Staz, a secluded, cozy 10-room chalet overlooking a pint-size frozen lake. Guests arrive by horse-drawn carriage or on foot, skis, or snowshoes via the region's 350-kilometer network of maintained Nordic and winter-walking trails, one of which passes by the front door. Locals begged me not to share this delightful find, but it's too good to keep to myself, not only for the rooms (some with private bath), the mountain background, and the blissful quietude, but also for the indulgent Engadine-region cuisine (hint: try the hay soup). Midday, skiers and snowshoers crowd the terrace for lunch or après-ski drinks and nibbles. After dinner, slumber in the snow-blanketed silence of the alpine countryside. Doubles from \$161 with breakfast.

HOTEL RESTORANT LEJ DA STAZ *St. Moritz-Celerina, Switzerland. 011-41-81-833-60-50, www.lejdistaz.ch/en*

HILARY NANGLE



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OCEAN STATE SEASIDE WINE AND CULINARY CLASSES

Learn about wines from around the world during a Vine to Wine weekend series at the Ocean House, a Relais & Châteaux property that sits on a bluff overlooking the ocean in Watch Hill, a village of Westerly, R.I. The 136-year-old property hosts a new Old World vs. New World Cabernet Sauvignon class, Jan. 17-18 and an Australian Wines class Feb. 21-22. Each event includes a Friday night reception and a Saturday class with wine tasting and cheese selections for \$40. The hotel's "food forager" leads free culinary classes each week through the winter with sessions on New England cheeses and homemade mustards, for instance. Rooms start at \$295, double occupancy. 888-552-2588, www.oceanhouseri.com

CHILL OUT ON A WINTER BATTERY WHARF TERRACE

Cozy up to a hot chocolate, gourmet s'mores, or a warming cocktail like the rum cobbler on the newly opened outdoor terrace at Boston's Fairmont Battery Wharf. The Winter Terrace has couches and Adirondack chairs, lap blankets, heat lamps, and tasty treats that are cooked over an open flame in the fire pits. Enjoy s'mores with marshmallows, graham crackers, and your choice of chocolate, peanut butter cups, or sliced banana. Or try the Gruyere fondue, which comes with a platter of air-dried salumi, cherry peppers, and crusty ciabatta bread. Stop

by the terrace from 5-10:30 p.m. daily; reservations required. 617-994-9000, www.fairmont.com/batterywharf-boston

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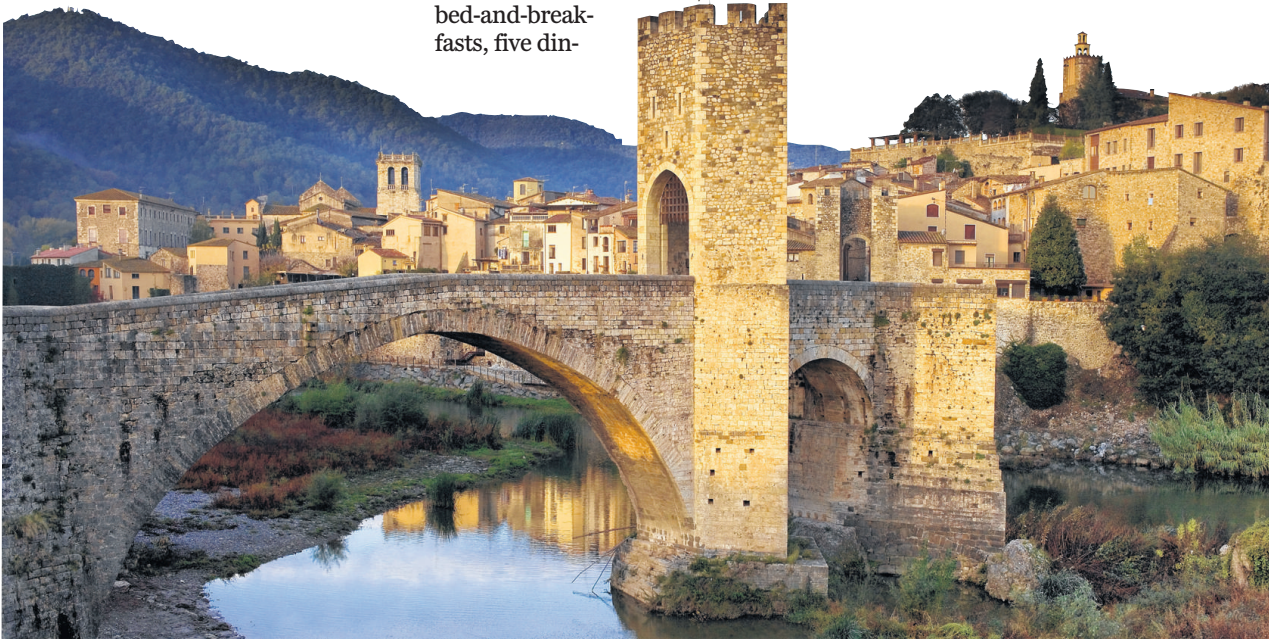
SWISS MUSEUM CELEBRATES OLYMPIC SPIRIT

The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, recently reopened after two years of renovations that nearly doubled the exhibition space. Located in the Ouchy district overlooking Lake Geneva, the museum has more than 300 screens and 1,000 objects that tell the stories of Olympic champions and the history of the Olympic Games. A new temporary exhibition, "The Russian Avant-Garde and Sport," explores sports in the Soviet Union in the

1920s and 1930s; it runs through May 11. Adults \$20, ages 6-16 \$11, under 6 free; \$5.60 for temporary exhibits. 011-41-21-621-65-11, www.olympic.org/museum

HIKE THROUGH CATALONIA

Walk through a park with extinct volcanoes and through medieval towns with some of the world's top cuisine on a new self-guided walking and hiking tour through the historic Catalonia region of northeastern Spain. The seven-night tour, offered by On Foot Holidays, takes hikers through the volcanic zone of La Garrotxa Natural Park, along the precipitous cliffs of the Cabreres, and on paths with views of the Pyrenees. Stay in towns such as Besalu (pictured below), Olot, and Girona, home to one of the world's top-ranked restaurants, El Celler de Can Roca. Rates start at \$1,316, including seven bed-and-breakfasts, five din-



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SECLUDED STAY BY THE SEA

BARAHONA, Dominican Republic — Casa Bonita Tropical Lodge is located on the edge of a biosphere reserve in the rugged and secluded southwest region of the Dominican Republic. It's a challenging three-hour drive from the Santo Domingo airport (private transfers \$210 each way for two people) however once you arrive at the lodge you may never want to leave.

A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Casa Bonita's 12 deluxe rooms and one suite feature simple palm wood and wicker furnishings, private balconies, and organic amenities. But why spend any time in your room?

Loll by the pool with magnificent views of mountains and the Caribbean, take a zip line through the forest canopy, go horseback riding on quiet trails, or indulge in one of many offerings at the Tanama Eco Spa. Situated in the woods, the spa utilizes indigenous elements like coffee, cacao, and pineapple in its treatments, including steam baths, body wraps, facials, and therapeutic massages on tables set in the river.

Top-notch cuisine, served in an open-air restaurant, features locally caught fish, produce from the organic garden, and locally made cheese, marmalade, and artisanal breads. The hotel arranges transportation to nearby beaches and eco-tours of Jaragua National Park. Deluxe room, \$211, double occupancy; all-inclusive package, \$340, double occupancy includes all meals and drinks.

CASA BONITA TROPICAL LODGE *Km. 17 Carretera de la Costa, Barahona, Dominican Republic. 800-961-5133, www.casabonitadr.com*

NECEE REGIS

EVERYWHERE

HIGH-QUALITY HEADPHONES

Phiaton's Chord MS 530 Bluetooth noise-canceling headphones fit comfortably even after hours of use, and provide superior sound in flight, blocking engine noise for easy listening but letting you tune into onboard announcements. The over-the-ear headphones connect quickly, offer intuitive controls, and have a backup cord in case you want to connect to a non-Bluetooth device, such as in-flight entertainment. Battery life covers you for at least three or four movies with noise-canceling on, with power to spare (the manufacturer claims up to 30 hours of talk or listening time). The dual microphone lets you make and receive calls. \$299 on Amazon.com. 866-313-3203, www.phiaton.com



TRAVEL-FRIENDLY THERMOMETER

Taking a person's temperature while on the go can be tricky, especially with fussy, squirmy, or sleeping subjects. Watertown-based Exergen has released the Smart Glow TemporalScanner, an infrared thermometer that lets you take a temperature by gently sweeping it across a person's forehead, capturing heat emitted by the temporal artery. It's quiet, easy to use, and noninvasive. The thermometer has an easy-to-read backlit display, remembers the last eight temperature readings, and is available at retailers such as Walmart, Target, Rite Aid, and Toys 'R' Us. \$49.99. 800-422-3006, www.exergen.com

KARI BODNARCHUK