

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



HILARY NANGLE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

CHECK IN VICTORIAN FACE, CHIC AT THE CORE

KENMARE, Ireland — Step out the front door of the five-star Hotel Park Kenmare and you're in this County Kerry heritage town famed for its stone circle, handmade lace, and traditional pubs. Step out the back, and descend through gardens to wooded paths lacing Kenmare Bay's shoreline. Staying in this Victorian-era hotel evokes a gentler time, but not a stuffy one. Guest rooms are spacious and dressed in rich fabrics and fine linens. Georgian and Victorian antiques, rich tapestries, and fine artwork decorate the hallways. A suit of armor guards a stairwell landing, a cheery red roadster tricycle welcomes guests at the front door, and fireplaces warm the public rooms, where afternoon tea is served. Victorian grace is balanced by contemporary chic. A sleek addition houses an indoor lap pool, fitness rooms, and the tony Samas Spa, a destination in itself.

Credit Francis Brennan, who purchased the property in 1986, for elevating it to its current status with the help of his brother, managing director John Brennan. Their success has made them celebrities. When not greeting and pampering guests, they share their innkeeping Midas touch on "At Your Service," a popular Irish TV series on which they advise innkeepers on how to improve their properties. They keep nipping and tucking the Park Kenmare too, earning more accolades, including Relais & Châteaux status. From \$228 per person, double occupancy, including breakfast.

HOTEL PARK KENMARE *Shelbourne Street, Kenmare, Ireland. 011-353-64-664-1200, www.parkkenmare.com.*

HILARY NANGLE

SUNDAY MORNING

CLASSIC KAFFEE IN OLD WORLD SETTING

VIENNA — Sunday is the perfect day to visit one of the historic coffee houses in the old city. Bring your favorite book (perhaps some Kafka would be appropriate?) and while the late morning away sipping cafe latte, a Viennese mélange (similar to cappuccino), or Rudesheimer Kaffee, made with espresso, brandy, whipped cream, and a dusting of cocoa. In recent travels, two late-19th-century establishments lured me inside with their opulent, old-world interiors — high ceilings, chandeliers, dark wood, enormous windows, marble tables, gold and red window drapes — and menu offerings that were equally sublime. Try traditional classics such as linzer torte, sachertorte, apple strudel, and pancakes with jam. For something savory, there are small hot dishes such as dumplings with egg, fried Emmenthaler with cranberries, or an omelet with ham. You'll find Cafe Bellaria nestled between the Museum Quarter and Parliament (6 Bellariastrasse, 011-43-1-523- 5320, www.cafebellaria.at). Cafe Sperl (pictured below), slightly off the beaten path not far from the Naschmarkt, also has billiard tables (11 Gumpendorferstrasse, 011-43-1-586-4158, www.cafesperl.at). Both open at 11 a.m.

NECEE REGIS



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



GABRIEL CAMPANARIO

HERE

P-TOWN EATERY MARKS 50 YEARS
The Mews Restaurant and Cafe is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a selection of new (or renewed) events. Bring your sombrero on Sunday nights, 6-8 p.m., and enjoy authentic fish tacos and other Mexican dishes. See award-winning musical acts on Monday nights (grab an early dinner with a stage view), from Zoe Lewis to Penny Arcade, or bring a companion on Thursday nights and get half off one entree. The beachfront restaurant, which has welcomed Al Gore, Whoopi Goldberg, and other notables, offers views of the harbor and Outer Cape. Entrees from \$12.50. 508-487-1500, www.mews.com

VALENTINE PACKAGE AT A NEW BOSTON BOUTIQUE HOTEL
Tour three of the world's finest wine-pro-

ducing regions this Valentine's Day without leaving New England. The Boxer, the city's newest boutique hotel, offers the romantic West End Rendezvous package, which includes one night's accommodations, 2 p.m. checkout, and one dessert and a wine flight for two at the hotel's restaurant, Finch. Try a Triennes Rosé from France, a William Hill Chardonnay from California, and a Greg Norman Shiraz from Australia, paired with a decadent dessert. Rates from \$295, double occupancy, not including tax and gratuities. 617-624-0202, www.theboxerboston.com

THERE

SEATTLE EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS COLUMNIST'S CITYSCAPES
See more than 100 sketches by a Seattle Times columnist during a new exhibit at the city's fascinating Museum of History & Industry, a facility that

documents and celebrates the diverse history of the city, the Puget Sound region, and the nation. "Drawn to Seattle: The Work of Seattle Sketcher Gabriel Campanario" (pictured at left) captures city views and, according to the artist, aims to "inspire others to pick up a sketchbook and start capturing their corners of the city." The exhibition runs through May 26. Members of Seattle Urban Sketchers will offer live sketching and share drawing techniques from 1-3 p.m. every Saturday through March. 206-324-1126, www.mohai.org

ESCAPE WINTER IN LISBON
Fly to Lisbon, Europe's warmest capital, to escape the cold and embrace the city's rich culinary, cultural, and night life. Explore by foot (statue of King José I in Palace Square pictured below) or funicular, enjoying views of the hilly landscape and the Atlantic, or sign up for a ground tour (additional fee).



Take advantage of SATA Airlines' new explorer package to Lisbon, which includes airfare and your choice of one of five hotels. Depart Boston on a Tuesday, Friday, or Sunday for the six-night stay. Rates, good through fall, start at \$1,359 per adult, double occupancy, and include air, hotel, all taxes, and breakfast, or \$533 for children under 6; children under 10 cost 10 percent of hotel rate, plus airfare. 800-762-9995, www.flytoazores.com

A HISTORIC TRAIN JOURNEY INTO IRAN
Join the first-ever European private train tour to Iran this fall aboard the Golden Eagle Danube Express. The five-country, 15-day inaugural train journey, called the Jewels of Persia, launches Oct. 14 by Seattle-based MIR Corp. Enjoy a champagne reception in the Royal Waiting Room in Hungary, learn more about the Dracula legend in Romania, explore the famous and fragrant Valley of the Roses in Bulgaria, see strange rock formations and ancient frescoed cave churches in Turkey, and visit eight UNESCO sites in Iran, including the ruins of Persepolis. Rates from \$12,995, double occupancy, not including airfare. 800-424-7289, www.mircorp.com/tour_PRAIL_PersiaEB.asp

EVERYWHERE

MINI AMP AMPLIFIES LAPTOP SOUND
Bring Cambridge Audio's DacMagic XS on your next trip and significantly boost the quality and clarity of your digital music, movies, and games. This 24-bit digital to analog converter and headphone amp plugs into the USB port of your PC or Mac laptop and into your headphones, offering a

much more dynamic, refined sound with superb bass that won't be drowned out by plane engines or other ambient noise. The device is powered by your computer, weighs just 3½ ounces, and measures smaller than a matchbox. Adjust the sound with two simple buttons. \$189 on Amazon.com. 800-663-9352, www.cambridgeaudio.com

CHARGERS KEEP YOU POWERED UP WHILE YOU ARE ON THE GO
Ventev's innovative new chargers let you quickly power your devices on the fly. One of my favorites, the Powerdash r900, plugs into your car's DC port and lets you charge USB-powered devices, including tablets, as you drive. Turn off the car, unplug your Powerdash, and hit a button on the USB end to turn on the charger's internal battery and continue refueling your device. The Utilitycharger 2100 has both wall and vehicle plugs, and the ability to charge two USB devices at once, from smartphones to tablets. And the lightweight rapid-charge Powercell 5000 offers 5000mAh of charging power through two USB ports (1A and 2.1A) for devices up to tablets. Even better, it turns off when not in use, so it won't drain its own battery. Buy the Powerdash (\$39.99), Utilitycharger (\$39.99), or Powercell 5000 (\$54.99) at Ventev. 800-759-9996, www.ventev.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

