

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CHECK IN

IN A CLIFF WITH AN ADRIATIC VIEW

DUBROVNIK, Croatia — The taxi driver picked us up at the Dubrovnik airport, spun us up and around a mountain-side road, and stopped in front of a gray bunker, announcing “Here you are: Villa Dubrovnik.”

Nothing around the bunker looked anything like the boutique hotel that we had understood to be convenient to the dock where in a day we were scheduled to embark on a cruise ship through the Adriatic Sea. All it had was a door.

Inside the door were elevator buttons, all going down. So down we went . . . to discover one of the sleekest, most ultra modern hotels in all of Croatia, it seems. Villa Dubrovnik is built on the edge of one of the many mountains here. The lobby is one floor down and the

rooms are several more floors farther down into the cliff. As you go deeper into the side of the mountain, the luxurious spa and the glass-walled rooms, the two restaurants, the pool, and finally the beach, reveal themselves one by one, and each is more sleek and contemporary in decor than the last.

Our room, with a floor-to-ceiling glass window looking out on the Adriatic and Lokrum Island across the way, was a lovely ode to using a view to every advantage. Even the bathrooms had one all-glass wall, the better to keep looking out to sea as you wash up.

In Dubrovnik's Old Town, which is a 15-minute walk from Villa Dubrovnik or a free 10-minute boat ride, all the inns and hotels are reached by way of many old stone steps (which can be a challenge when one is dragging a suitcase). They are charmingly old Croatia, once you reach them, but Villa Dubrovnik — all its rooms, the restaurants, the beach, the suites with their private al fresco Jacuzzis and the

pool, is an easy elevator ride up or down.

The hotel, one of the “Small Luxury Hotels of the World,” is surrounded by pine, orange, and lemon trees, and bougainvillea and oleander flowers. All are perched on the side of the mountain, so that as you dine alfresco in one of the hotel's two restaurants, your view is of flowers, the sea, and in the distance, Dubrovnik town.

We tried the hotel spa's “Diamond Bed” treatment, a 30-minute strangely relaxing sense experience using color, sound, lights, and scent.

Rooms are \$286.40 per night, more for a deluxe suite with Jacuzzi tub on the deck and free room service.

VILLA DUBROVNIK *Ulica Vlaha Bukovca 6, 20000, Dubrovnik, Croatia. 011-385-20-500-300. www.booking.com/Villa-Dubrovnik,reservations@villa-dubrovnik.hr*

JULIE HATFIELD

HERE

BOSTON'S NEW HIDDEN AND HISTORIC SPOT FOR FINE DINING
When you arrive at 140 St. James Ave. in Boston, whisper the secret password and then descend the century-old barrel-vaulted staircase to a space once known as the Copenhagen Room, a restaurant that closed in the 1950s. Now you'll find the 140 Club, part speakeasy and part wine cellar at The Fairmont Copley Plaza. Here, beginning in January, chef Laurent Poulain will host 30 guests max for intimate dinners at a long, candlelit farmer's table. These new monthly five-course dinners, part of the 2015 Winter Series, will offer a seasonal menu and wine pairing. Sign up now for Jan. 14, Feb. 11, or March 11. Price: \$95 per person, including tax and gratuity. 617-267-5300, www.140supperclub.eventbrite.com

SLEEP HERE FOR TWO FREE VERMONT LIFT TICKETS
Book a room at Topnotch Resort in the village of Stowe, Vt., and get two lift tickets for Stowe Mountain Resort for each night you stay. The resort, which blends rustic ski lodge feel with luxury offerings, sits on 120 acres and has 68 guestrooms, several full-size homes for rent, an award-winning spa, and indoor tennis facilities for winter use. The property's onsite restaurants, Flannel and The Roost, offer fresh, local cuisine and craft beer and cocktails. The Ski Free package rates start at \$137 per person per night, based on double occupancy, and include accommodations, two lift tickets per room per night delivered to you, and free shuttle service to and from the slopes. 855-923-7730, www.topnotchresort.com

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APP KEEPS TABS ON TOP WINTER SKI DESTINATIONS
Stay on top of the conditions at your favorite resorts with OnTheSnow's free Ski & Snow Report app, which works on Android and Apple mobile devices. The popular app had 3.7 million downloads from around the world before it was completely redesigned for this upcoming season. Use it to gather important information on ski destinations, including up-to-date snowfall and weather data, ticket prices, special discounts, and a resort profile with the type of terrain and lifts. View resort webcams, if available, see a gallery of photos, and see trail maps. You can also post your own photos and snow reports, read gear reviews, and set up a customizable powder alert, so you can find out when your favorite ski area gets fresh snow. 720-887-7720, www.onthesnow.com



JACKSON HOLE'S FANCY NEW RUSTIC RESORT
Stay at Fireside Resort in Jackson Hole, Wyo., and enjoy one of 23 luxury cabins that form a small village in the shadow of the Grand Tetons. Each pet-friendly cabin, with its rustic but modern decor, has a fireplace, a full-size kitchen, beds with European-style duvets and goose down pillows, and daily cleaning service. Those who can't turn off will enjoy the flat-screen TV and resort-wide Wi-Fi. The cozy cabins — made by Wheelhaus, a company that builds sustainable “rolling” cabins — are located just a five-minute drive from the ski slopes at Teton Village, seven minutes from the town of Jackson, and eight minutes from Grand Teton National Park. Rates start at \$225 per cabin (pictured at left), per night; get 20 percent off if you mention TBYB, and get your stay for free if you decide to buy a Wheelhaus rolling cabin. 877-660-1177, www.firesidejacksonhole.com

EVERYWHERE

TINY DEVICES MAKE DATA BACKUP AND SHARING A BREEZE
Leef's latest products let you easily transfer files between your Android device and computer, or backup and store photos, videos, music, and other files in a flash — no need for cables, Wi-Fi connections, or cloud services. The Leef Bridge 3.0, which is smaller than your thumb, has a micro USB and a regular USB on either end of a



tiny drive that holds 16GB to 64GB of data. Plug the ingenious device into the micro USB port of your Android phone or tablet to backup or transfer photos and videos. Or save several movies onto the tiny device and use it to stream to your smartphone or tablet. The Leef Access micro USB reader lets you quickly transfer images and videos from a micro SD card to your Android mobile device for backup, so you can quickly upload images to e-mails or social media sites. Or use it to backup information from your phone or tablet onto a micro SD card. Leef Bridge 3.0 \$22.99-\$64.99; Leef Access \$12.99. www.leefco.com

A BACKPACK WITH THE ULTIMATE SECRET POCKET
Keep your passport, travel money, camera, and other precious gear secure but within easy reach with MindShift Gear's new rotation180 Travel Away Backpack. This handy bag has a movable hip belt with a gear pouch that only the wearer can operate. Put your items in the pouch (it fits up to an 8-inch tablet) and rotate the hip belt around so it secures in place in a hidden area at the bottom of the pack, inaccessible to pickpockets. To get to your money or other travel items, unhook a magnetic buckle and then slide the waist belt around until the pouch reaches the front. Remove the hip belt from the backpack and use it on its own too. The backpack has pockets to conceal a 15-inch laptop or 10-inch tablet, compression straps on the side for holding trekking poles or a tripod in place, an external water bottle pocket, and an 18.5-liter main compartment for storing a jacket, snacks, and other travel items. \$199.99. 855-757-2727, www.mindshiftgear.com

KARI BODNARCHUK