

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



Eric Goodwin on a visit to St. John in the US Virgin Islands.

When he’s not operating one of his many restaurants or hospitality consulting and recruiting businesses, Eric Goodwin loves to travel — especially to St. John in the US Virgin Islands, where he can snorkel, hike, and take in all that the island has to offer. The 54-year-old father of two grown children is co-owner of the Friendly Toast, which recently opened its sixth location in Bedford, N.H. (others are in Boston, Cambridge, Burlington, Mass., Portsmouth, N.H., and Burlington, Vt.), as well as Lure Bar & Kitchen in Portsmouth, and a startup cold brew coffee company, NOBL Coffee. Goodwin said he incorporates food and drink from his travel destinations into his menus — and is always on the lookout for new potential offerings. We caught up with Goodwin, who lives in Alton Bay, N.H. (on Lake Winnepesaukee), and has an apartment in Boston’s Seaport district, to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? St. John in the US Virgin Islands is my favorite spot. I love to spend time in the water and the snorkeling there is by far the best: You can swim off any of the world-class beaches and quickly find amazingly colorful fish around the vibrant coral reef, and swim with families of sea turtles any time, any day. My most exhilarating water experience was while I was swimming in Maho Bay, when a Giant Spotted Eagle Ray — about 16 feet in width — swam directly at me and averted me at the last second. There are no cruise ships to the island,

which keeps it private in many ways. It’s full of New Englanders and kind-spirited natives. The food is diverse — from casual to upscale, with beautiful water views. St. John is the best place to relax, hike, snorkel, and explore the surrounding islands and British Virgin Islands. I had the opportunity to catamaran through the BVIs and snorkel throughout Tortola, Necker Island, the caves around Virgin Gorda, and other very cool spots.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? Wherever I am traveling, it’s fun to eat the food that that city or country is most famous for. Part of experiencing the culture is eating what the natives eat, or finding what the locals love. When I’m in the islands, I take full advantage of all the frozen concoctions I can. The drink of St. John is a Painkiller, which is also offered on all Friendly Toast cocktail menus — or if you’re at my house in the summer. I was able to stay in London for a month when my daughter was studying abroad, and while the food scene there isn’t as high-level as other destinations, they take their pubs seriously, so that was fun — and of course Hendrick’s Gin, which is cucumber-infused and served with cucumber rather than limes there, is now another favorite staple of mine.

Where would you like to travel to but haven’t? There are so many places I want to see. The south of France and Greece are on the top of my list, but, for a larger, more adventurous trip, I would love to visit Africa and go on a safari and see and experience being in the presence of the big animals in their natural habitats.

VIP LOUNGE | ERIC GOODWIN

SEEKING OUT THE BEST OF THE BEST

One item you can’t leave home without when traveling? My headphones by Beats and my iPhone, of course.

Aisle or window? Window [because I] have to see all the action. I love seeing the skyline and the horizon while traveling at night, and the lights of the city you are traveling to as you are approaching.

Favorite childhood travel memory? When I was 12 my family visited my grandparents in Delta Junction, Alaska, for three weeks. The landscape of course is breathtaking and vast and still so vivid in my memory. Seeing Mount McKinley and visiting the surrounding glaciers was unforgettable. It was light out 24 hours, and it was surreal. My grandfather had a motorcycle that I drove all day, alongside the newish oil pipeline. . . . I never wanted to leave. The best part of that trip was spending time with my Gramps, listening to his stories, learning from him, and seeing the place he called home.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Being in the food and hospitality industry, I want to eat at the best restaurants. I avoid formal and pretentious places, but seek out places that are deeply passionate about food, creative cocktails, wine, service, and design.

Best travel tip? Always keep spare toiletries and a change of clothes in a backpack or carry-on. I’ve had lost luggage several times. And, if you haven’t already, I recommend getting TSA pre-check: it saves a lot of time in any airport.

JULIET PENNINGTON

HERE

ADULT NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
Spend a night with Italian actress Isabella Rossellini, see a Stevie Nicks-inspired performance, and learn about the power of sound during a sensory storytelling experience at the Museum of Science. The programs are part of SubSpace, the museum’s experimental playground for adult social experiences. They include Obscured Vision: A Night of Sonic Storytelling, Sept. 11, when you slip on a blindfold and go on a narrative journey hosted by science reporter Ari Daniel and An Evening With Isabella Rossellini, Oct. 10, when the actress, author, model, and animal lover joins dog expert Brian Hare to talk about animal cognition and nature. Also, don’t miss a screening of “The Blair Witch Project” in the Charles Hayden Planetarium Oct. 30 and Edge of Seventeen, a performance by Niki Luparelli featuring the music of Stevie Nicks Nov. 7, and many other events. Tickets are cheaper in advance: \$10-\$35, depending on the show; ages 18 and older. 617-723-2500, www.mos.org/adults

MFA OPENS NEW ISLAMIC GALLERY
Learn about the arts of Islamic communities, from Spain to India and beyond, and how these rich artistic traditions evolved over 13 centuries at a new permanent gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts. The Arts of Islamic Cultures Gallery features 69 objects that represent different cultures, time periods, and geographic locations. It includes a door created for America’s first world’s fair in 1876 (made using fragments of medieval



Egyptian woodwork), Arabic calligraphy, Chinese ceramics (made in the Middle East and in China), Islamic textiles, and audio recordings of the Quran. The MFA has also commissioned Bangladeshi-British artist Rana Begum to create a work for the gallery to be installed next summer. The gallery was developed over eight years through consultations with scholars, artists, and members of the Boston-area’s Islamic communities. Admission: \$25 adults; \$23 students and seniors; free 17 and under; voluntary donation Wednesday nights after 4 p.m. 617-267-9300, www.mfa.org

THERE

CELEBRATE BEER, WINE, AND MORE IN BRUSSELS
If you’re headed to Brussels soon, don’t miss two events that showcase some of the area’s best brews, Bordeaux, and restaurants. The Belgian Beer Weekend

takes place Sept. 6-8, featuring 350 of Belgian’s top beers. The event, which is held at the Grand-Place in the city center, is free to attend, but you’ll just need to pay for each tasting. The city also hosts the Eat! Brussels, Drink! Bordeaux Sept. 5-8, during which chefs from some of the city’s top restaurants prepare their signature dish. The event features 31 chefs, five cheesemakers, and four pastry chefs. Admission ranges from \$21.50 (Lunch Pass) to \$43 (Dinner Pass). Buy a Wine Pass to sample additional Bordeaux wines and attend a wine workshop (about \$18 in advance, \$22.60 at the door). www.brussels.be/belgian-beer-week-end and eat.brussels/en

TAKE AN ARCTIC PHOTO TOUR
Capture images of polar bears, snowy owls, and the northern lights during a new seven-day polar bear photography adventure to the northernmost US town: Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow) in Alaska. Gondwana Ecotours has launched its Polar Bear Adventure Tour, Sept. 21-27, which includes a chance to meet lo-

cals, talk to tribal elders about native life in modern times, view equipment used in tribal whaling expeditions, and take photos of marine life and wildlife. Guests can also discuss issues of global warming and sea ice recession with an Arctic environmentalist and author. Price: \$8,770 per person, based on double occupancy, includes flight from Fairbanks to Utqiagvik, a photography lesson from wildlife photographer Frank Stelges, accommodations in lodges, inns, and a Scandinavian-style hotel overlooking the Arctic Ocean, local guides, ground transportation, and all meals. 877-587-8479, www.gondwanaecotours.com/tour/polar-bear-adventure

EVERYWHERE

COMPACT COOK SET FOR TRAVELERS
GSI’s new Pinnacle Dualist cookware set offers the perfect ultra-lightweight solution for backpacking and travel, taking up precious little space — it measures just 5.9 by 6.4 by 5.9 inches — and weighing just 1.3 pounds. Bring



it backpacking or on cold-weather adventures (it’s perfect for whipping up a toasty drink while snowshoeing or backcountry skiing) or stash it in your car for emergencies. The set comes with 1.8-quart anodized non-stick pot and heat-resistant lid with a built-in strainer. The pot holds two 20-ounce insulated mugs (complete with Sip-It lids), each of which nests in a durable 20-ounce plastic bowl that stores a folding spork — everything you and a friend would need for your wilderness adventures. The pot handle folds over and locks the lid (and the pot’s contents) in place for travel, and you can store the entire set in the included waterproof storage bag, which doubles as a sink. Buy the Pinnacle Dualist on its own (\$69.95) or get the Pinnacle Dualist Complete, which includes a folding 3-ounce micro stove and windscreen (\$109.95). The two bowls can easily fit the stove and a 110- or 220-gram propane canister to keep your cooking solution compact. www.gsioutdoors.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

