The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS

FOR ADVENTURER, TRY AN EXPEDITION CRUISE

LINDBLAD EXPEDITIONS Considered the founder of small-boat adventure cruising and ecotourism, with journeys to the Galápagos, South Pacific, Alaska (pictured above), Antarctica, and the Arctic Circle; allied with National Geographic, with topnotch naturalists, and photographers. 800-397-3348, www.expeditions.com

QUARK EXPEDITIONS A leader in polar expeditions, offering a variety of Arctic and Antarctic voyages, known for its state-of-the-art ice-breaking ships and adventure options such as kayaking, camping, mountaineering, and zodiac landings. 888-978-5792, www.quark expeditions.com

G ADVENTURES One of the largest adventure travel companies in the world, traveling to all seven continents; marine biologists and naturalists join eight- to 27day cruises to the Arctic, Antarctica, and West Africa. 888-800-4100, www.gadventures.com

HURTIGURTEN For 120 years, this groundbreaking company has been showing passengers Norway's widely scenic, fiord-filled west coast; voyages to Antarctica, the Arctic, and Greenland are also offered.866-552-0371, www.hurtigurten.com

ECOVENTURA

A leader in cruises to Ecuador's Galápagos Islands, using 20-passenger motor yachts; a 16-passenger, custom-built vessel also offers scuba diving in the waters surrounding the lesser visited northern islands.800-633-7972. www.ecoventura.com

DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT

THE TIP

HOW TO SEE THE FLASH

Conditions aboard a cruise ship can be almost ideal for seeing the elusive "green flash," the ray of green light at the end of sunset. Some travelers search in vain their whole lives, although others who know where and how to look see the flash often. Here's how to bolster your chances: You must be higher than the apparent horizon, which is why an ocean horizon is perfect but an island will block the green flash every time. It also helps to have clear air. A line of clouds at the horizon can make the flash hard to see unless the sun sets below them. Use binoculars or a telephoto lens since the flash is tiny and disappears fast. Finally, don't stare at the setting sun. The red rays will bleach your retina and the "green" flash will look yellow. Wait until the sun is almost down to

DAVID LYON

THE TIP

start watching.

FIRST-CLASS AMAZON

Discover the wonders of the Ecuadorian Amazon rain forest and visit local communities while enjoying the comforts of a five-star boutique hotel. The newly launched Anakonda Amazon River Cruise line offers three-, four-, and seven-night journeys aboard luxury liners featuring 18 suites with private bathrooms and air conditioning, dining room, bar, observation deck with outdoor Jacuzzi, and al fresco lounge. The line operates year-round, and every trip is unique, based on the changing seasons. The 25-person crew includes a concierge, purser, paramedic, four nature guides, and four local guides. Cruises depart from El Coca, a 45-minute flight from Quito, Ecuador's capital. Rates for 2013 from \$1,195; 2014 rates from \$1,600. www.anakondaamazoncruises.com

NECEE REGIS



A tasty pastry shop at sea

n the new 3,560-passenger Royal Princess, there's one area of the ship you should enter at your own risk. No, we're not talking the engine compartment, but the pastry shop, a 1,100-square-foot room devoted to decadent deliciousness.

Head pastry chef Eric LeRousic and 19 pastry cooks create a rotation of 130 sweet treats. At the "action stations," you might see one of them dipping strawberries in chocolate, torching crème brûlées, or pulling fudge.

Everything's made on site, including cheesecakes, ice

cream, and classic soufflés.

For breakfast alone, they turn out 6,000 pieces of pastry. During the day, they bake 3,000 brownies, chocolate chip and peanut butter cookies, not to mention 2,000 carameldipped cream puffs, and assorted eclairs, mousses, and cupcakes. Dinnertime brings trays of gorgeous gâteaux, tarts, and tortes, and there's always something flambéed, such as Bananas Foster with bourbon vanilla ice cream.

Happily, the ship also offers an oversize fitness center. DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT



PHOTOS BY DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

BEST-VALUE TOURS TO EUROPE Last chance for Fall'13 specials!

2014 tours now booking! Feb/Apr. Sch.Vacation- Rome/ Florence/Venice, Lake Como/ Switz., Sorrento w/Rome or Sicily Paris/Normandy, Portugal, Ireland Other '14 trips- Gr.Tour of Italy, Puglia, Spain, Holland/Belgium, European River Cruises, more Group leaders- call for details on forming a group & benefits

TURKISH AIRLINES NON-STOP FLIGHTS FROM BOSTON TO ISTANBUL **INCLUDED**

from \$1,795_{pt}

13-day group tour visiting Istanbul, Troy, Ephesus, Pamukkale Konya, Cappadocia, Ankara

Hotels, Sightseeing, Most Meals **LIMITED TIME PROMOTION**

VALID UNTIL SEP 16, 2013

flotours call:1.800.417 3880

Breaking News boston.com

HERE

EXPLORE AND SAVE WITH BOSTON ATTRACTIONS PASS

Save a bundle when you visit Boston's top attractions using Smart Destinations' Go Boston Card. The pass gives you up to 55 percent off admission at 53 attractions in Boston and beyond, including the New England Aquarium, Fenway Park Tour, and Cape Cod Maritime Museum. It also covers the ferries to Provincetown, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard. The pass, available for one, two, three, five, or seven days, lets you skip wait lines at most attractions. The three- to sevenday cards get you free admission for a Boston Duck Tour, Boston Harbor Segway Tour, or New England Aquarium Whale Watch. Rates from \$36.99 (child, single day) to \$194.99 (adult, seven-day pass). 866-628-9027, www.smart destinations.com

SAVOR THE VINEYARD'S FOOD AND

Enjoy New England cuisine and wines from around the world at the 2013 Martha's Vineyard Food and Wine Festival in Edgartown, Oct. 17-20. The event features tastings, a sommelier throw-down, tips on pairings, an opera dinner, and talks about Martha's Vineyard architecture and a Somerville-based bean-to-bar chocolate factory. The historic Harbor View Hotel hosts the opening reception Oct. 18 and the Grand Sunday Brunch Oct. 20, and offers a special package that includes Saturday night stay and two tickets to the Grand Tasting for \$399, double occupancy; add Friday night for \$169. 800-225-6005, www.harbor-



view.com; festival tickets \$40-\$185 per event, 508-280-0080, www.mvfoodandwine.com

THERE

MARRIOTT'S NEW APP

Use your smartphone and the new Marriott Mobile App to check in at 329 Marriott properties in the United States and Canada (except the province of Quebec). This free app, available through iTunes or Google Play, lets you check in anytime after 4 p.m. the day before your stay up to two hours before you arrive. Receive an automatic notification when your room is ready, and

go directly to the mobile check-In desk to pick up your key. Four Marriott properties, including **Boston Marriott** Copley Place, let

guests use the app

to request addition-

al towels, wake-up

calls, and housekeep-

WANDER PORTUGAL'S COASTAL

ing, as part of a test program. 888-

236-2427, www.marriotthotels.com

Explore a new walking trail along the

southwestern tip of Portugal during your stay at the Martinhal Beach Resort and Hotel, a family resort near Sagres. The hotel has launched a walking package, starting Nov. 16-23, that includes guided hikes along the newly opened Rota Vicentina, which wanders through Costa Vicentina National Park, past sea cliffs, historic forts, and postcard beaches in Sagres, Europe's southwestern-most point. Hike four sections of the trail and spend a day biking on paved and dirt paths. Then enjoy massages and other treat-

ments at the hotel's Finisterra Spa. Seven-night packages start at \$117 per adult per night. 011-351-282-240-200, www.martinhal.com

STAY ON CHICAGO'S GOLD COAST Make reservations

now to stay in the new

Thompson Chicago,

scheduled to open Oct. 1 in the heart of Chicago's Gold Coast. The 247-room hotel overlooks Lake Michigan and offers easy access to downtown restaurants and clubs and shops on Michigan Avenue and Oak Street. Awardwinning British designer Tara Bernerd created warm, contemporary spaces with a strong emphasis on texture and bold colors. The hotel's restaurant, Nico, will serve Italian cuisine in a rustic setting, with a focus on fresh pasta. Rates from \$289, double occupancy. A special pet package, good through Feb. 2, 2014, includes a pet toy and dish, and local pet information. 312-266-2100, www.thompsonhotels.com

EVERYWHERE

SHOES THAT MAKE TRAVEL STYLISH AND SIMPLE

Take some of the stress out of air travel by wearing shoes that easily slip on and off at the security gate and make a fun statement along the way. The Swanx, a Washington state-based company, sells Sanita clogs (at left) that are super supportive, comfy for travel, and come with fun designs hand-painted by a dozen local artists. Choose from more than 150 designs depicting beach scenes, holiday themes, floral prints, geometric shapes, animals, astronomy-related images, and other fun visuals. The Swanx also produces hand-painted Converse shoes, if that's more your style. Clogs run \$99.95 (on sale) to \$139.95.800-203-2513, www.theswanx.com

KARI BODNARCHUK