

Encounter

Phnom Penh

Hilltop sanctuary

Come at dawn to Wat Phnom, sacred site at the center of Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh. The temple sits atop a hill, said to be the only one in this soft sprawl of a city. At the edges, even in the early hours, motorbikes buzz on busy streets, and vendors hawk souvenirs.

But climb the narrow stone steps to the top, and a terrace, where a woman quietly sweeps. Through a doorway, candles burn and a man, wearing baggy pants and no shirt, he a bit of a Buddha himself, unrolls prayer mats beneath statues that do not flicker in the face of time.

TOM HAINES

Globe-trotting

Notes from our blog

Southwest ambitions

Southwest Airlines plans to start flying into New York's LaGuardia Airport. Right now, the nearest the discount carrier gets to the city is Long Island MacArthur Airport, about 50 miles away.

Southwest says that it has submitted a \$7.5 million bid in United States Bankruptcy Court to take over the 14 LaGuardia slots held by ATA, which filed for bankruptcy protection in April. With those slots, Southwest could fly as many as seven daily round-trips. This move is a bit unusual for Southwest, which generally prefers to fly into secondary airports to save time between flights and avoid higher fees — the reason the carrier flies into Providence instead of Boston.

So why are they doing it?

“Even in this volatile environment, we have said we must monitor the competitive landscape and take advantage of prudent market opportunities,” said Gary Kelly, Southwest's chairman and CEO. In other words, this is in some part a nod to the fact that competitors like JetBlue and Virgin America fly directly into JFK and AirTran into LaGuardia.

Despite the economic malaise, Southwest has been making other strategic moves recently, cutting marketing deals with Canada's WestJet in July and with Mexico's Volaris this month to book flights north and south of the border starting next year and in 2010, respectively.

PAUL MAKISHIMA



NEWS, DEALS, AND DISPATCHES

Boston.com/travel is where to go no matter where you want to go.

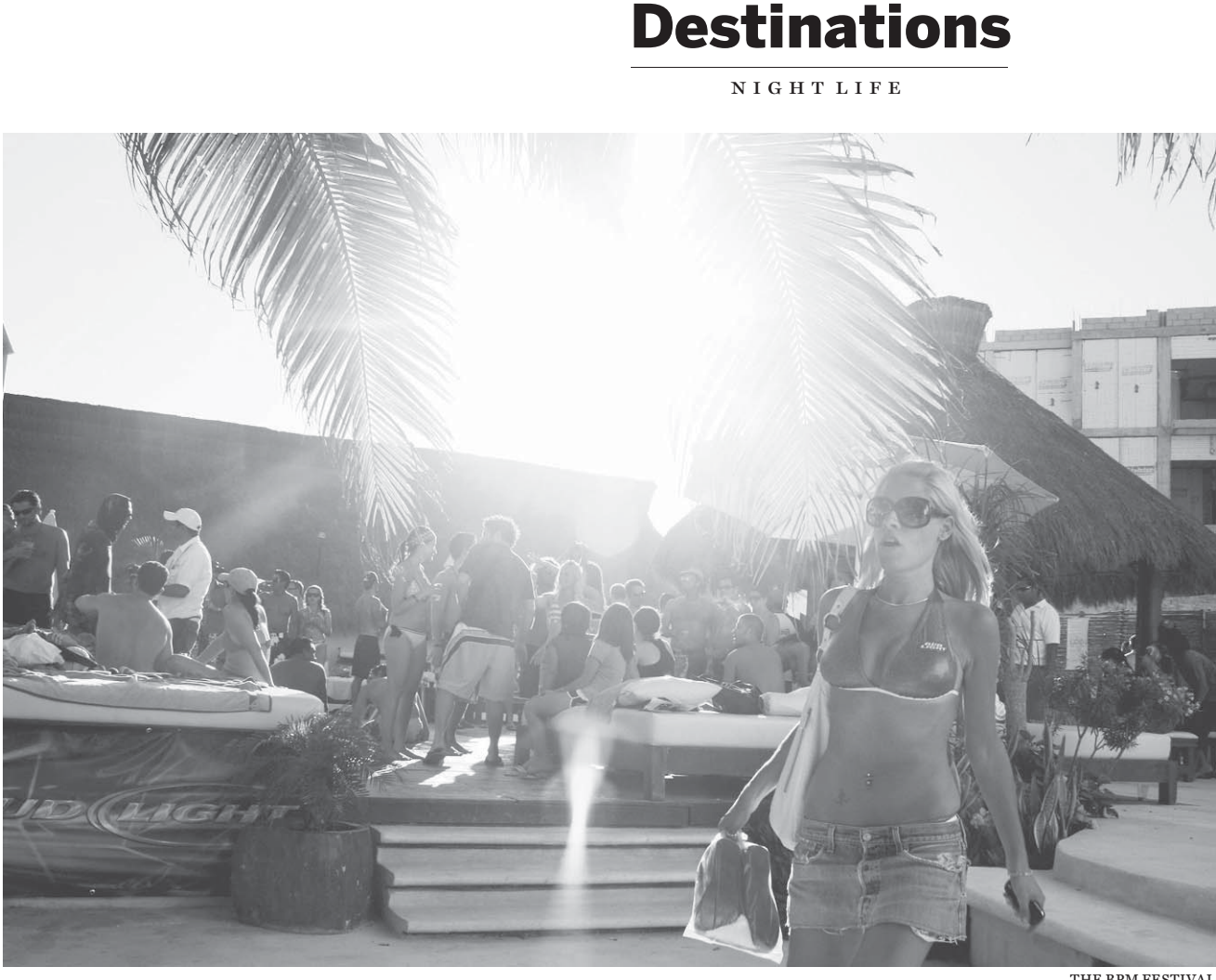
Gearing up



A wee wallet

When I head out to explore a new city or run an errand while I'm traveling, I don't always want to tote a bag of valuables with me. Banjees wrist wallets, made by Sprigs of Mount Kisco, N.Y., can hold my hotel key, credit card, and cash, leaving my hands free. Made of fleece or a polyester-spandex blend, this super-soft, unobtrusive pouch slips onto your wrist and keeps personal items within reach but out of the way. It has a zipper for security, is reversible, and comes in more colors and designs than are in your wardrobe, from simple solids to paisley prints. It retails for \$14.95 at sprigsville.com, or by calling 888-327-2241, or try REL.com, where it sells for \$14.

KARI BODNARCHUK



Come January, people will party on and off the playa at The BPM Festival in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

Welcome '09 with a shimmy

JAN. 2-11
PLAYA DEL CARMEN, Mexico
The BPM Festival: There are many ways to welcome 2009. You could spend your post-holiday sweeping up pine needles and finishing the stale Christmas cookies, or you could stretch out by a pool in Mexico listening to some of the world's biggest DJs. A tough decision. If you choose the latter, the sunny beach town of Playa Del Carmen — known as the Mayan Riviera — is hosting the BPM Festival. DJs get the crowd in a dance music frame of mind at daytime beach parties. Then top DJs come out in the evening to help partygoers work off all those pina colodas. Headliners include Sander Kleinenberg, Victor Calderone, Lee Burridge, Pablo Ceballos, and Damian Lazarus. VIP wristbands, which provide access to all events, are \$200. www.thebpmconference.com.

Where they went

Bermuda

WHO: Corinna, 38, and Philip Kersten, 41; John Fulghum, 42; Dan Forster, 46; and Bob Baldwin, 50, all of Nahant; and Ulf Westhoven, 44, of Swampscott.

WHERE: Sailing from Bermuda to Nahant.

WHEN: A week in late June and early July.

WHY: “My husband had always had this as a dream, to do blue-water sailing, which just means that you're really offshore,” Corinna Kersten said.

ONE AND TWO LEGS: Kersten's husband, Philip, and Fulghum made the trip from Nahant to Bermuda and back, but Kersten, Forster, Baldwin, and Westhoven only sailed the return leg. The voyage home took 4½ days at sea. Philip Kersten, who was captain and organizer, is a lifelong sailor and racer. The couple belongs to Nahant Dory Club.

GROUNDWORK: The group of 10 sailors met regularly for months leading up to the trip. “We had meetings about different things,” Kersten said. “For the medical one, we bought pigs' feet and sliced them open and learned how to sew stitches.”

TRIAL RUN: The crew was sailing Tioga, the Kerstens' 44-foot Alden, a limited series made in Rhode Island 30 years ago. Kersten began her leg by flying into Bermuda and then taking a short sail. “We sailed from St. George's all the way around Bermuda to Hamilton. It's very tricky because there are a lot of reefs. The Newport to Bermuda race had ended the day before and when we were there, they did a harbor race.”

NONSTOP CLOCKWORK: After clearing customs, they took off from St. George's. They sailed the entire time, with two people taking three-hour shifts sailing, being on standby, and sleeping. “It took everybody a day or two to get into the routine. One person was seasick one day and three guys couldn't eat for three days.”

A WEATHER THRILL: Though they departed under sunny skies, a forecast storm hit about 36 hours later. “My husband and all the other boys were excited, but



Corinna Kersten of Nahant at the helm of the Kerstens' sailboat en route from Bermuda.

I was a little nervous,” Kersten said. “The waves started to get bigger, it became windy, and we had hard rain and thunderstorms, but we could still sail through the whole thing. Everybody knew what they were doing, so it was still OK. We made it through the Gulf Stream, then everything turned out to be perfect again, blue skies, beautiful sunsets and sunrises.”

HAPPY HOMECOMING: Their first sight of civilization was a buoy off Nantucket. They reached Nahant around noon on the Fourth of July. Friends and family had tracked the crew's voyage using a GPS satellite messenger system. “We had a big welcoming committee with all our kids, family, and friends waiting for us with champagne.”

DIANE DANIEL



SEE WHERE THEY ALL WENT

For more photos or to share yours, visit boston.com/travel/wheretheywent. Send your suggestions within two weeks of your return to diane@bydianedaniel.com.

Rave

Vancouver chef makes local luscious

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Local writers Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon caused a stir in foodie circles when they published “The 100-Mile Diet,” their account of a year of eating foods from a tight geographic radius.

Despite the book's almost numbing recitation of potato dishes, the couple's idea seems to be catching on. If you want to sample this extreme version of eating local, check out the 100 Mile Tasting Menu at Vancouver's Raincity Grill. In the hands of a sure chef, it can be a revelation.

The restaurant, according to general manager Brent Hayman, was the first in the world to offer a 100-mile tasting menu. Situated in Vancouver's West End, practically



DAVID LYON FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Salmon with leeks, both from within 100 miles of Vancouver.

on the shore of English Bay, the menu naturally draws on fish from local waters, as well as meat, cheese, and local produce.

The menu is seasonal, but might start with a beet-root salad with goat cheese, followed by as-

paragus vichyssoise, then seared sea scallops with pork belly and cauliflower. After roasted Muscovy duck, dinner might conclude with macerated strawberries sweetened with honey.

Some new ingredients are in the pipeline. “There's an olive grove on one of the Gulf Islands,” says Hayman, “so we may be able to cook with olive oil soon.”

Raincity Grill, 1193 Denman St., 604-685-7337, www.raincitygrill.com. Dinner nightly 5-10 p.m., lunch Monday-Friday 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., brunch Saturday-Sunday 10:30-2:30. 100 Mile Tasting Menu at dinner only, \$54.75 per person, \$80 with wine.

PATRICIA HARRIS

Benassi, Dirty South, and Mark Farina. The club is literally a circus, with clowns, acrobats, and contortionists wandering among the thousands of revelers. Party tickets are \$65, but those with a bit more change in their pockets can reserve a private VIP cabana for \$1,500, or a VIP ticket for \$145. *835 Francisco St., www.giantclub.com.*

FEB. 13
ST. MORITZ, Switzerland
Art on Ice: European medalist Sarah Meier and world ice dancing champions Isabelle Delobel and Olivier Schoenfelder are starring in this edition of the celebrity show, but the true novelty in this pre-Valentine pageant will be the musical entertainment. For those wondering what ever happened to 1980s crooner Paul Young, perky Katrina and the Waves front woman Katrina Leskanich, and Cutting Crew lead singer Nick van Eede, the three are singing along to skaters in Switzerland and providing the music for the show. There are also Art on Ice shows happening in Zurich and Lausanne. Tickets for the event, which includes dinner and endless cocktails, are — keep smiling — \$1,000 each. www.artonice.ch.

PLAN AHEAD
APRIL 6
JACKSON, Wyo.
All Stars of Rock and Roll: When the ski season draws to a close, resorts do anything and everything to keep skiers and snowboarders coming back to the slopes, including staging big free concerts. Jackson Hole Mountain Resort is throwing an all-star concert with some of the best musicians from Boston, Steely Dan, the Doobie Brothers, Smashing Pumpkins, and Jane's Addiction. There will also be appearances and performances from John Mellencamp, Barry Goudreau, Fran Sheehan, Jeff “Skunk” Baxter, Kenny Aronoff, James Montgomery, and Chris Chaney. *307-733-2292, www.jacksonhole.com.*

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online to confirm. Christopher Muther can be reached at muther@globe.com.

Add moguls to your holidays

Want to ski your way through the holidays? A five-night Holiday Week Ski Package, for stays Dec. 23-Jan. 9, includes meals and skiing on New Hampshire's Pats Peak, Mount Sunapee, and Ragged Mountain. The package includes five nights' lodging at either the Blue Acorn Inn, Henniker House B&B, Highland Lake Inn, or Rosewood Country Inn; a country breakfast each morning; lift tickets for four days at your choice of slope, and dinner each evening. Prices start at \$536 per person (for the Blue Acorn Inn). Three-night packages, in which guests ski two days and ring in the New Year, are also available beginning at \$220 per person (for the Henniker House B&B).

Visit www.granitestatevacations.com and click on Inn Packages.

Grin and bear it

The Planters Inn in Charleston, S.C., has an offer designed to chase away those Wall Street blues. The Bear Market Holiday package includes two nights' lodging, continental breakfast for two each morning, and a tour of the Historic District in a horse-drawn carriage. The package at this Relais & Châteaux property starts at \$399 and is available through Feb. 26.

Visit www.plantersinn.com or call 800-845-7082.

Free breakfasts

Through Feb. 28, AAA members staying at Hyatt hotels in North America get a complimentary full breakfast in addition to the 10 percent discount members receive year-round.

Visit www.hyatt.com and look for the AAA Members link. Specify offer code BREAKF.

\$500 off per couple

CIE Tours International is giving discounts up to \$500 per couple on 2009 escorted vacations to Ireland, Britain, Italy, and Eastern Europe, as well as for European river cruises. To get the discount, book a tour of 10 days or longer or a river cruise for travel May 1-Oct. 31, together with either flights or travel insurance, and pay in full by this Dec. 31. There is also an offer to save \$300 per couple on shorter tours.

Visit www.cietours.com, see a travel agent, or call 800-CIE-TOUR (243-8687).

This donation's for you

If you and a companion have invitations to the Obama inauguration and can spare \$40,000 for the Fairmont Washington D.C.'s Eco-Inaugural Package Jan. 18-21, here's what you will get: four nights in the two-bedroom Lexus Hybrid Living Suite; use of a Lexus LS 600h hybrid vehicle with driver; a donation of \$2,000 to the National Geographic Society; organic spa treatments; a custom-tailored organic ball gown; two butlers; and an organic supper for 10.

For more details, visit www.fairmont.com/washington. For reservations, call 202-429-2400.

RICHARD P. CARPENTER

Most prices quoted are for double occupancy, minus taxes and fees. Offers are subject to availability. Richard P. Carpenter can be reached at carpenter@globe.com.