

Encounter

MEXICO

Some like it hot

At El Braserio, a restaurant in the Mexican city of León, wooden tables with colorful cloths and walls covered in long-ago painted murals welcome a business crowd on weekdays, and families and tourists on weekends.

Amid this setting of static tradition moves a woman pushing a cart, on which intimate tastes come to life. Like your salsa hot? There is habanero, serrano, and jalapeno. Or guero, a sweeter but hot pepper. With fresh tomato, red and green, the woman works quickly, adding the choice of peppers and flavoring with garlic and salt until finally she presents it proudly, and there is nothing to do but eat.

TOM HAINES

Globe-trotting

NOTES FROM OUR BLOG

Olympian heights

Daytime temps have already dipped to 20 degrees Fahrenheit on Whistler and Blackcomb, British Columbia's great side-by-side ski mountains, and the area north of Vancouver is already making snow in anticipation of opening for US Thanksgiving. (And both sites will host the 2010 Winter Olympics.) When my wife and I were there in January, though, the talk of the ski village was the new gondola system under construction.

Traditionally, most skiers have spent a day on Whistler, then the next day across the valley on Blackcomb. But when the Peak2Peak gondola goes into public operation on Dec. 12, skiers will be able to speed 2¾ miles across the valley in 11 minutes so they can ski both mountains the same day. The new gondola, which can carry 2,050 people per hour each way, will link 8,171 acres of ski terrain in a single continuous lift system.

DAVID LYON



NEWS, DEALS, DISPATCHES

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

Gearing up

Be seated artfully

Few things can tax a biped's patience (and feet) more than standing. GCI Outdoor, a company based in Higganum, Conn., offers the ultralight Packseat, which will come in handy whether you're waiting to board a bus in India or slogging through airport security around the holidays. This compact, tripod-style stool has collapsible legs, so you can fold it up and slip it into its slim (15-by-4-inch) travel bag. It measures 21 inches high, supports up to 300 pounds, and weighs 1.6 pounds.

For those wanting back support, GCI Outdoor also makes the Quick-E-Seat, which comes with a padded, adjustable backrest and is available in two heights: 16 or 20 inches. The Packseat sells for \$19.50 and the Quick-E-Seat for \$30 or \$36 at L.L. Bean (800-441-5713, llbean.com). Or, go to gcioutdoor.com.

KARI J. BODNARCHUK



A niche in the 15th-century St. Joan of Arc Chapel at Marquette University holds a stone at which Joan prayed before battle.

NOV. 23

BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

Frock Me! The idea of planning a big foreign shopping spree in the current economic climate is about as tempting as a desert camping trip in August. There is, however, a way to indulge in a bit of European shopping without cashing in the last of your withering IRAs. Frock Me! is a vintage clothing event that takes place several times a year in Brighton and London. England's top secondhand vendors gather to sell everything from Yves Saint Laurent cocktail dresses to vintage jewelry, hats, and shoes. Of course, shopping vintage requires a bit more work, but part of the fun is the hunt and the battle for the perfect bargain. The event runs from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If you miss the Brighton Frock Me!, the next London edition is Dec. 14. *Sallis Benney Theatre, University of Brighton, Grand Parade, \$5, frockmevintagefashion.com.*

NOV. 18-22

AMSTERDAM

Crossing Border Festival: Most festivals focus on a specific genre, but Crossing Border creates a cultural goulash by mixing music, books, and film in one event. In a single evening you could listen to a reading and talk by Michael Cunningham, and hear music from Ben Folds and Julian Cope. Also on the bill are Death Cab for Cutie, Van Dyke Parks, and Kathleen Edwards. Evening passes range from \$13 to \$37. *Royal Theatre and National Theatre, crossingborder.nl.*

NOV. 12-16

NEW YORK

New York City Horror Film Festival: Just because the pumpkin-shaped marshmallow Peeps will be gone from store shelves by mid-November doesn't mean the horror film season also need be done. Slash-er flick-loving moviegoers can check out the North American premiere of "Resident Evil: Degeneration," the bloody video game turned bloody CGI animated gorefest. The festival screens dozens of movies from around the globe, handing out awards for best feature film, best actor, and, of course, best special effects. *Tribeca Cinemas, 54 Varick St., nychorrorfilmfest.com.*

DEC. 12-14

SAALBACH-HINTERGLEMM, AUSTRIA

Rave on Snow: Winter resort Skicircus kicks off its season with a massive party of nonstop DJs and live music. The annual party started 15 years ago (hence the painfully dated "rave" reference in the event's name), and since then has snowballed into a forum for top Austrian and German DJs to entertain rowdy skiers and snowboarders. This year's Rave on Snow features sets from Chris Liebing, Loco Dice, Radio Slave, Pascal FEOS, and Matthias Tanzmann. Tickets range from \$42 to \$50, a weekend pass is \$76. *Go to partysan.net; under Events, click on Rave on Snow.*

PLAN AHEAD

FEB. 16-17

LONG BEACH, CALIF.

Ragga Muffins Festival: Jamaica exports its finest to California for two days of dancehall sounds in Long Beach. This year's Ragga Muffins Festival features sets from Beenie Man, Sly and Robbie, Gregory Isaacs, Collie Budz, and Cherine Anderson. Advance tickets range from \$39 to \$55. *Long Beach Arena, 300 East Ocean Blvd., bobmarleydayfestival.com.*

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

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



Bag a bargain but be fashionable: England's top secondhand vendors sell vintage everything from cocktail dresses to jewelry, hats, and shoes.

Where they went

WHO: John Mellecker, 74, of Holden.

WHERE: England.

WHEN: 12 days in May.

WHY: To tackle his 15th long-distance walk in the United Kingdom since he retired from the financial-services industry nine years ago.

FOR THE LOVE OF . . . : "I never planned to make a hobby of this," said Mellecker, who has logged more than 1,700 miles on foot in the UK. "I did the Coast to Coast Walk after I retired, and I was just smitten." Mellecker is married but does his walks alone. He stays at bed-and-breakfasts and sometimes uses luggage transport services, as he did for this trip with Contours Walking Holidays.

ANNUAL THEME: "Every walk, I look for a theme," said Mellecker, who this time traveled along Lady Anne's Way, a route that follows the footsteps "sometimes in spirit and sometimes on the actual road," he said, of Lady Anne Clifford. Born at Skipton Castle in 1590, the 15-year-old Anne was denied her inheritance because she was female. She got justice at age 53 and spent the rest of her life restoring her castles, rebuilding churches, and creating almshouses.

FINDING HIS WAY: "The walk is very obscure," said Mellecker, who walked 103 miles in eight days. "The challenge is it's not marked in the traditional sense but is cobbled together on country lanes and existing paths and there are no signs." He used a guidebook, a GPS device, and a compass. "To do these walks, people should have a real comfort with using compasses and maps." The first half was in the Yorkshire Dales and then into Eden Valley in Cumbria. "I had a pretty good altitude gain and loss, with a tremendous variety of terrain."

ANCIENT TO MODERN: "The weather was beautiful, but there were always thunderstorms lurking around in the afternoon," he said. "England is so compact that history is compressed. I walked through Iron Age villages, checked out 19th-century



John Mellecker at Brougham Hall. Lady Anne Clifford restored the chapel in 1659.

mining operations, saw prehistoric forts, and walked on the same roads Roman legions walked on." A more modern sight, and sound, occurred in Eden Valley, when Royal Air Force fighter jets flew overhead on training missions.

HERE'S TO LADY ANNE: At the end of each day, after checking in to the B&B, Mellecker would visit the local pub for a celebratory pint of beer. Towns he stayed in included Skipton, Grassington, Buckden, Askrigg, Appleby, and Penrith. In Appleby he visited an active almshouse Clifford built. "She kept a diary of everything she did, which was the basis of the walk, and in it she describes laying the cornerstone in that almshouse. There was a resident reading in the courtyard, and I felt like I'd stepped into the 1600s as an intruder and then went back through the arch to the 21st century."



SEE WHERE THEY ALL WENT

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

Rave

A sainted bit of the Rhone in Wisconsin

MILWAUKEE — On the campus of Marquette University is a chapel, but one that did not begin its life in Wisconsin. It rose in 15th-century France as the Chapelle de St. Martin de Sayssuel in the village of Chasse, 12 miles south of Lyon in the Rhone Valley.

The structure was purchased in 1926 by millionaire Gertrude Hill Gavin who had it dismantled stone by stone and rebuilt on her Long Island estate.

In 1964, new owners of the estate gave the chapel to Marquette, which had it disassembled and shipped to the school.

The chapel is a remarkable piece of Gothic architecture, but the thing that makes it special resides within: the Joan of Arc stone. Documents sent with the chapel show that in 1429 this stone supported a statue of the Virgin Mary, at which Joan of Arc prayed before leading her countrymen into battle with the English in the

Hundred Years' War.

Besides the stone, the chapel arrived with other furnishings: a 15th-century Gothic altar; a 14th-century tapestry depicting the Virgin Mary, priests, and angels; and wooden prayer kneelers, a crucifix, a baptismal, and a Gothic font. Oh, and those orb-like things dotting the front lawn? Roman urns dating to the 2d century.

Many old buildings have a story to tell, but few have one that spans this much history and geography.

St. Joan of Arc Chapel, Marquette University, 735 North 17th St., Milwaukee, 414-288-6873, marquette.edu/chapel. Tours Monday-Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday noon-4. Mass celebrated Monday-Friday at noon and Monday-Thursday at 10 p.m. during academic year.

FRANCES J. FOLSOM

Go to Vegas, vote for savings

Here's a timely way to get a discount. Spend at least \$200 for rooms, show tickets, nightclub passes, or golf tee times at vegas.com. Then choose your presidential candidate and get \$20 off. (The website's ballot even has a "none of the above" option, as does the Nevada ballot.) Visit vegas.com/crapshoot, where you can also find how the candidates are doing.

Shopping coupons

With the holidays fast approaching, many members of the New England Inns & Resorts Association are offering shopping packages. An example: A Retail Therapy Package at the Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge features overnight accommodations, breakfast, discount coupons to the Prime Outlets in nearby Lee, and a Relaxation Kit from the inn's gift shop. Prices start at \$165 a night, including tax and tips.

For this and a half-dozen other shopping offers, go to newenglandinnsandresorts.com and look under Travel Packages & Promotions.

\$100 sweeteners

A Berkshires to Boston Weekend Package is being offered by both the Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston and its sister property, the Cranwell Resort, Spa and Golf Club in Lenox. The package includes overnight accommodations and a \$100 Fairmont Dining Credit or \$100 Cranwell Gift Card. Stay at one and get a complimentary upgrade when you next stay at the other. Prices start at \$295 a night, and the package is available Nov. 14-March 31.

Visit cranwell.com or call 800-272-6935, or fairmont.com/copleyplaza or 800-441-1414.

Free massage

During November, Stowe Mountain Lodge in Stowe, Vt., is featuring a Spa Spectacular. Rooms will be available at the lowest rate of the season with one complimentary massage per room, an \$85 value. Rates begin at \$229 a night.

Visit stowemountainlodge.com or call 888-4-STOWE-VT (888-478-6938) and mention promotion code SPANOV.

Azores for \$649

Azores Express has new air and lodging packages with stays at bed-and-breakfasts, country inns, and manor houses in Portugal's Azores archipelago. Prices start at \$649 per person from Boston.

Visit www.sata.pt or call 800-762-9995.

\$36 daily credit

For the rest of the year, Destination Hotels & Resorts, with properties in several states, is celebrating its 36th anniversary by giving a \$36 daily room credit that can be applied to golf, spa treatments, dining, or other activities. The Destination Delivers promotion is valid on stays of at least two nights. Prices vary by lodging place.

Visit destinationhotels.com.

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.