

Encounter

CALIFORNIA

Way of some flesh

Ron Cauble, his long white hair cascading toward a counter holding a camel spine and wooden drawers crowded with pinned insects, explains The Bone Room, a Berkeley store that sells, among many provocative things, full human skeletons, the miscellaneous femur, and a fine collection of skulls.

“What I’m really more interested in is people broadening their view of any object, so that they can then look at it in different ways,” Cauble says. “If you get stuck on coming in here and looking at bone and only thinking of death, you may miss out on shapes, colors, smells — all these other things.”

TOM HAINES

Globe-trotting

NOTES FROM OUR BLOG

Last-minute luck

Lastminutetravel.com launched its World for a Dollar promotion last week. Starting late this month visitors to the website will get a chance to book a room for up to seven consecutive nights for \$1 per night at any of the 15,000 hotels in the site’s world-wide inventory.

Reservations can be made only during one 15-minute period each day, Monday to Friday, over two weeks. And Last Minute won’t reveal in advance what day the promotion will begin or when on any given day the 15-minute reservation period is. The only way to find out is to keep checking the site. Among the conditions: You can score a cheap room only once during the campaign and the booking must be made online and completed within the 15-minute time frame. Sound hard? Register on the website for clues to help you out.

PAUL MAKISHIMA

 NEWS, DEALS, DISPATCHES

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

Gearing up

World at your wrist

Whether you’re skiing in Chamonix, France, or on a business trip in California, you can always know what time it is at home, thanks to the dual-time function of the Altis. This tricked-out timepiece, made by Highgear, will also tell you the number of vertical feet you have skied and your rate of descent, plus your altitude and the barometric pressure and trend. That way, you can see whether a storm is rolling in, a handy feature for travel in the mountains or the city.

The water-resistant wrist computer, which comes in titanium and stainless steel, also has a digital compass, thermometer, backlight, and lap counter, an alarm, and multiple log books for storing data. The titanium model sells for \$250, the stainless steel for \$225 at www.highgear.com (toll-free 888-295-4949), or recently for \$147 at www.BackcountryOutlet.com.

KARI BODNARCHUK





Bonhomme Carnaval is the representative of what the Québécois call the largest winter festival in the world.

Let’s party like Canadians

JAN. 30 - FEB. 15
QUÉBEC CITY
Carnaval de Québec: This chilly outdoor party is primarily considered family fare and comes complete with a creepy mascot, a sort of half-man, half-snow creature called Bonhomme Carnaval who struts around the carnival grounds wearing a ceinture fléchée and a cocky grin. But there are adult activities in the evening, and we’re not simply referring to the hot tubs in the spa area. Friday and Saturday nights at 8, there is an outdoor dance party that varies in theme from night to night, encompassing everything from swing dancing to country music. For a true taste of Québécois hip-hop, check out Taktika on Jan. 31. *Place Desjardins, Parc de l’Assemblée Nationale, and Place D’Youville, 866-422-7628, www.carnaval.qc.ca.*

FEB. 13 - MARCH 1
NICE, FRANCE
Carnaval: If you’re going to celebrate, you might as well do it where there are palm trees, beautiful people, and a few decent beaches. A trip to the French Riviera may seem a bit decadent to get your partying in before the start of Lent, but isn’t decadence what Carnaval is all about? This year’s theme is King of Masquerades, so you can wear a disguise and make a complete fool of yourself without fear of embarrassment. The flower parade and parade of lights draw the crowds, but it’s the evening parties at local taverns that will keep you up late. Entrance to the parades is free, but reserved seating ranges from \$20 to \$30. www.nicecarnaval.com.

FEB. 25 - MARCH 8
NEW YORK
Frigid New York: Here’s a budget-friendly way to see a lot of cutting-edge theater in a short amount of time. Frigid is 30 shows, none costing more than \$15, taking place in three theaters. Shows include “How Does a Drug Deal Become a Decent Third Date?,” “The Hefner Monologues,” and “The Dysfunctional Guide to Home Perfection, Marital Bliss, and Passionate, Hot Romance.” No, it’s not “Shrek, the Musical,” and for that you should be thankful. www.frigidnewyork.com, 212-777-6088.

MARCH 13 - 15
BUTLINS, ENGLAND
Bloc: Taking place in the vacation complex Minehead, Bloc is an electronic music melting pot of styles featuring everything from the classically twisted industrial grind of Aphex Twin to the spirited soul of Jamie Lidell. Other acts include Future Sound of London, Carl Craig, and Afrika Bambaataa. And if you require a break from weekend-long music, the venue offers a water park and amusement park rides. Tickets for the full weekend, plus accommodation at Minehead, cost \$189. www.blocweekend.com.

PLAN AHEAD
APRIL 17 - 18
SPRINGFIELD, MO.
Rock ‘n’ Ribs BBQ Festival: At long last, an opportunity to get in touch with your beer-swilling, muscle shirt-wearing inner self. This celebration of gluttony and motorcycles is actually a fundraiser for agencies that help children in the Ozark region, but you’ll be too busy wiping your hands on your rib bib and pounding a fist in the air to the music to remember that. The entertainment lineup has not yet been released. Tickets are a steal at \$7 each. *Bass Pro Shop Headquarters, West Sunshine and South Campbell streets, 877-430-7427, www.rocknribs.com.*

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

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

Where they went

CALIFORNIA

WHO: Bob McDermott, 63, his wife, Ginny, 59, and their son Chris, 17, of Sudbury.
WHERE: California.
WHEN: A week in August.
WHY: To take guided Segway tours.

SILLY FOR SEGWAYS: Bob McDermott’s first time on one was in 2003, when his mother, now 93, requested a trip to the company’s headquarters in Bedford, N.H. “She said, ‘Before I die, there’s something I want to do.’ I thought it would be a trip to Paris or the Grand Canyon, but she said, ‘I want to buy a Segway.’” She did, and so did McDermott. She has since given her self-balancing, electric personal transporter to her son.

TREAT FOR THE FEET: Since 2004, Bob and Ginny have spent many hours touring Sudbury and neighboring towns by Segway. His fondness for the Segway is practical. “I’ve got really bad feet,” he said. “I can’t walk around much. With the Segway, it’s like walking, only faster. And you can go right up to things.”

OFF-ROAD RIDING: Bob McDermott located three tours in the San Francisco area alone. The first was around Angel Island State Park in San Francisco Bay, where they toolled around on all-terrain, fat-tire Seg-



Bob, left, Ginny, and Chris McDermott at Angel Island State Park in San Francisco Bay.

ways. “I thought it was going to be a flat piece of land, but we started at a beach and then kept going up and up and up, with better and better views. The island has a history going back to the Civil War, and it was used as an immigration receiving area, where they’d quarantine people coming over from China and the Pacific.”

ADVANCED DEGREE: With Electric Tour Co., they went on an advanced-rider tour up and around Telegraph Hill and also down the famed hairpin-turn section of

Lombard Street. “The Segway automatically slows to 2 miles an hour on a downhill,” McDermott noted. “At Lombard, there were cars of all sizes and bikers lined up for about a quarter mile to go down. When we came up, seven people on Segways, everyone was taking our photos and saying, ‘Look at those people.’” The trip with City Segway Tours, from dusk to dark, was quite different. “It was all flat, and we went through the financial district and down to the waterfront.”

GOING FLAT OUT: While the McDermotts enjoyed all their tours, their favorite was farther south, along Venice Beach and Santa Monica, with Segwow. “The guide put walkie-talkies on the handlebars so we could communicate without having to stop. He’d give commentary about the architecture and things. We were on this flat, smooth bike trail that went for miles, so we were able to go fast and see a lot of things.”

DIANE DANIEL

 **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

Distillery District gives Toronto a flavor of chocolate

TORONTO — In the mid-to-late 19th century, Gooderham and Worts was considered the largest distillery in the British Empire. Today, those 13 acres in downtown Toronto are a national historic site of 40-plus preserved Victorian industrial buildings.

In the past few years, the Distillery District has become a pedestrian village with galleries, restaurants, cafes, a theater, artist studios, and boutiques.

As you meander the brick-lined streets, look for Soma Chocolatemaker. Billing itself as a “chocolate bar, factory,

boutique,” Soma is a chocolate lover’s heaven. At one end of the long narrow space, glass cases hold a selection of small-batch production offerings such as caramels dipped in Venezuelan dark chocolate with a sprinkle of fleur de sel, almond clusters, and a selection of truffles, including Australian ginger and lime, whiskey, and roasted cacao bean.

Featured chocolate beverages include Mayan hot chocolate (dark chocolate spiced with cinnamon, ginger, orange peel, Madagascar vanilla, and chili peppers) and Bicerin, a drink from the

Piedmont in Italy (melted dark chocolate with espresso and whipped cream).

At the other end, small tables offer a place to enjoy biscotti, shortbread, and other baked sweets, gelato, coffee, and all things chocolate.

In between, a window overlooks the “chocolate laboratory,” a glistening white tile and stainless steel kitchen where the goodies are crafted.

Soma, 55 Mill St., Building 48, Suite 102, 416-815-7662, www.somachocolate.com.

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