



ESSDRAS M SUAREZ/GLOBE STAFF

Encounter

CENTRAL PANAMA

Always a new leaf

The seeds come from Cuba. The plants grow in lush highlands of western Panama. But it is in the central town of La Pintada, in an open-air, single-room factory on a low hill, that the cigars — torpedoes, panatellas, Churchills — are finally made.

On a weekday afternoon, two men return from lunch, sit at wooden desks, pick up dried leaves, and roll. Fingers reach to brush a bit of gluten, then cut a clean end with a moon-shaped blade.

The sun is high and hot above the tin roof. Oh, for the cool of a heavy rain!

TOM HAINES



NECEE REGIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Rave

LA gets power chic

LOS ANGELES — Industrial chic is all the rage these days, nowhere more so than at the Edison, a stylish bar and lounge located in the bowels of a former power plant in this City of Angels.

To get there, walk along Harlem Place Alley in the gritty downtown business district and find the discreet entrance to the historic 1910 Higgins Building. (Hint: You'll see a doorman.) Descend a grand staircase, beneath an Art Deco chandelier, and enter the plant's original boiler room, a soaring space whose new incarnation includes leather couches and long sleek bars tucked between mechanical artifacts, such as an enormous power generator.

Waitresses wear beaded dresses from the 1920s while serving handcrafted, vintage libations, including the Dark and Stormy (dark rum, ginger beer, and fresh ginger) and The Hemingway (absinthe and champagne). There's also a selection of single-malt and blended scotches, and beer.

You don't go to the Edison to eat, but to drink and be seen — though it does have a short and satisfying menu offering small bites like sweet potato fries, oysters, and deviled eggs, along with salads, truffled mac and cheese, lobster corn dog, and salmon club sandwich served on toasted brioche.

The dress code prohibits athletic wear of any kind, flip-flops, tee T-shirts, and torn jeans. To avoid a line it's best to go early in the evening, before 9.

The Edison, 108 West 2d St., Los Angeles, 213-613-0000, edisondowntown.com.

NECEE REGIS

Globe-trotting

NOTES FROM OUR BLOG

Hertz wants to share

Hertz, which had been testing rentals by the hour, says that it is planning to launch a big push into the car-sharing market later this year. The prospect of a multinational concern like Hertz getting into the business is potentially huge. Rich Broome, senior vice president for corporate affairs and communications, said that the company would initially roll out the program in a handful of large US cities. Boston, he said, would "probably be part of a second wave." Hertz has 8,100 locations in 147 countries, so it's not hard to imagine that eventually customers will be able to sign up in Boston, but use car-sharing services around the nation and the world.

Pilots praise Logan

This week the Air Line Pilots Association named Logan as its Airport of the Year. The world's biggest pilots' union cited Logan's efforts to reduce runway incursions and excursions through enhanced markings and technologies and its new physical improvements to reduce congestion and delays.

PAUL MAKISHIMA



NEWS, DEALS, DISPATCHES

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

Destinations

FOOD



Upward of 10,000 people are expected to sample the wares at the Great British Cheese Festival in Cardiff, Wales.

500 cheeses, so little time

SEPT. 27-28

CARDIFF, WALES

Great British Cheese Festival: Cheesemakers from across the United Kingdom will show their wares at this 9th annual Welsh festival at the dramatic Cardiff Castle in the capital city. Ten thousand dealers, makers, and cheese enthusiasts will gather to taste such delicacies as Hafod, a new organic raw-milk variety, and Welsh Farmhouse Caerffili. After a trade-only cheese contest on Friday night, Britain's biggest cheese market will showcase 500 cheeses that visitors can sample and purchase; ale, cider, and English wine will also be for sale. Cheesemaking demonstrations, whiskey and malt tastings, and a class on setting up cheese boards will round out the festivities, along with classes on matching wines and ales with cheese, and explorations of cheese regions. Cost is \$12.70 for adults, \$9.70 for seniors, students, and those under age 16. [thecheeseweb.com](#).

SEPT. 20-OCT. 5

MUNICH

Oktoberfest 2008: The tradition is long — this is the 175th year in this Bavarian capital — and the festivities exuberant at the annual celebration of the art of German brewing. The festival starts with a gala parade of colorful floats pulled by horses to the historic square of Theresienwiese where the first barrel of beer will be tapped. For 16 days, beer will be served in 14 tents that have a seating capacity of 100,000. There is no admission fee; cost of a liter of beer is \$10.50-\$12. [muenchen.de/rathaus](#).

OCT. 3-5

FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS

Oktoberfest: If Germany is too far and too expensive this year, you might consider an Oktoberfest in the states. This city in the Texas Hill Country revels each year in oompah bands, polka and other dances, plenty of German and Czech crafts, and beer tents. There are special activities for children, and of

course German sausages, sauerkraut, and other traditional fare. A two-day pass is \$10, three days for \$15. 830-997-4810, [oktoberfestinfo.org](#).

OCT. 5

REDWOOD CITY, CALIF.

Arts & Olive Festival: Looking for a low-key outing that combines culinary learning with the arts? This festival on the Cañada College campus combines art exhibits with seminars on olive growing, olive tastings, and sales of olives and olive-related products. Olive trees, which were uprooted when the college was being built in the 1960s and then replanted, have star spots on campus. The event, a bargain at a suggested donation of \$5, benefits scholarships to this community college near Silicon Valley. 650-306-3428, [olivefest.com](#).

OCT. 9-11

DENVER

Great American Beer Fest: This is the place for beer aficionados with three days of tastings from 400 breweries competing for top prizes. Last year's winners included Pyramid Crystal Weizen from Seattle; Whitetail Wheat from Billings, Mont., and Imperial Chocolate Pumpkin Porter from Anchorage. Daily tickets allow unlimited one-ounce tastings, and many of the booths are staffed by the brewers themselves. Chefs also demonstrate and offer tastings of foods matched to beers. Tickets range from a day rate of \$50 to \$385 for a three-day deluxe pass. 888-822-6273, 303-447-0816, [beertown.org/events/gabf](#).

PLAN AHEAD

NOV. 2-DEC. 4

YOSEMITE PARK, CALIF.

Vintners' Holidays: This national park extends its season by offering eight two- to three-day sessions of wine tastings through November and into early December. This year's offerings include wine seminars, gala dinners in the Ahwahnee Dining Room, and plenty of opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the park in late fall. Some of the wineries to be featured this year are Talbott Vineyards, Karly Winery, Mumm Napa, Tablas Creek Vineyard, Bonny Doon Vineyard, and Dutton-Goldfield Winery. Packages with lodging range from \$530-\$1,345. Tickets for individual events without lodging are \$149. 801-559-4884, [yosemitepark.com](#) (click on Yosemite specials).

ALISON ARNETT

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; call or check online to confirm. Alison Arnett can be reached at [alacarte59@aol.com](#).

Where they went

BURMA

WHO: Tom Schultz and Shelley Reeves of Carlisle, both 52.

WHERE: Mergui Archipelago, Burma.

WHEN: 10 days in March.

WHY: "We're snorkeling all the great reefs of the world and we didn't know this one existed," said Reeves about Mergui (pronounced mer-goo-ey), a 200-island barrier reef system in the Andaman Sea near the Thai coast. The couple learned of it from the World Wildlife Fund Travel Program, which just started trips there. "When we heard it was so remote and unspoiled and that this was an opportunity to see corals thousands of years old, we jumped on it."

REEFS AND ISLANDS: The group of 12 Americans spent 11 nights on a live-aboard scuba boat with several guides, including a coral specialist and a naturalist. A Burmese government official joined them "to make sure you don't go places they don't want you to go," Schultz said. The boat's crew, used to accompanying dive trips, "had never stepped foot on these islands," he said. They snorkeled several times a day and visited nine islands by motorized Zodiac.

COLOSSAL CORAL: "It was the most amazing snorkeling we'd done because of the undisturbed corals, some of which were 2,000 or 3,000 years old and as big as a house," Schultz said. Reeves's favorite fish were the cuttlefish. "Usually they're small, but these were the size of a serving platter and all shades of purple and green. And we saw some of the hugest moray eels we'd ever seen, in all colors of polka dots and stripes."



Shelley Reeves at Tower Rock in the Mergui Archipelago.

LAND LOVERS: "We weren't expecting the stuff aboveground to be so awesome," Schultz said. The biggest island they visited was Lampi where they saw "about 35 species of birds, monkeys, and signs of wild pigs, civets, and, of all things, elephants. It's a protected marine park, but we saw Burmese fishing boats. They left when they saw us." On another island they saw Burmese military officials "protecting their interests" in an area replete with swiftlets. "They take the nests and sell them to the Chinese for bird's nest soup."

RARE SIGHTING: "We had several encounters with the Moken, a nomadic people who live on small boats and a totally fascinating culture to get to meet," Schultz said. "We were reluctant to introduce ourselves and approached cautiously, but they were welcoming," Reeves said. "Their dugout boats had a little cover and a charcoal grill. In one we saw, with a family of six, they were drying sea cucumber and grilling eel. We traded pencils and little things for a piece of eel."

ON THE ROCKS: On their last day, the group spent a few hours at the only resort on the archipelago, the Myanmar Andaman Resort. "Here's this guy mixing mojitos," Reeves said. "It looked so strange."



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](#).

Gearing up

Rebuff those recliners

Tall people, laptop users, travelers with children, and anyone who wants to preserve his or her sliver of space in an airplane may appreciate Knee Defenders from a company called Right Brain.

These clever yet simple plastic gadgets hook onto the arms of your tray table and prevent the seat in front of you from reclining. This protects your legs or laptop from being squashed and gives you a little extra room to stretch. You can adjust the amount the seat reclines and also provide your fellow passenger with a kindly worded Knee Defender Courtesy Card, which explains what the device is and how you are using it.

Knee Defenders work with most, though not necessarily all, seats and tray tables. Available for \$14.95 per pair from [gadgetduck.com](#).



KARI J. BODNARCHUK

Ferrying Fido here, there, and abroad

No Pet Left Behind: The Sherpa Guide for Traveling With Your Best Friend

By Gayle Martz, with Delilah Smittle
Thomas Nelson, 224 pp., \$16.99

By Diane Daniel
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

One of my favorite "girlfriend get-aways" was a road trip to Florida with Sabrina and Roxy, my two dachshunds. On the way down, we stayed at a Days Inn, shared a bed (using our bedding), and, to humor them, watched "Animal Planet."

Judging by all the websites and travel guidebooks directing humans to where their canine companions are welcome, I'm in good company among people who

enjoy traveling with their pets.

While most of the guides I've seen explore the where, "No Pet Left Behind: The Sherpa Guide for Traveling With Your Best Friend" focuses on the how. Author Gayle Martz is a former flight attendant who in 1989 developed Sherpa bags, a line of soft-sided pet carriers that fit under an airplane seat.

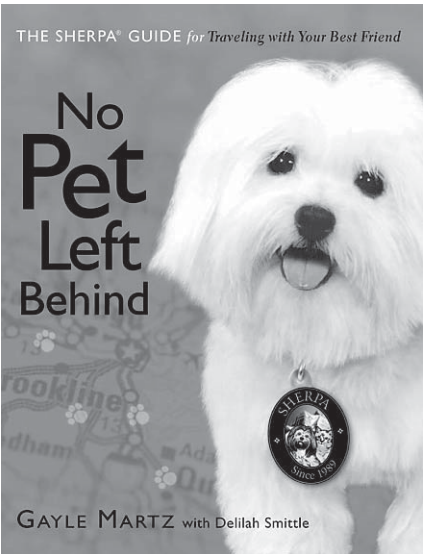
Although "No Pet" focuses on dogs, Martz includes information on travel with cats, birds, ferrets, lizards, rodents, and more. For example, to help with motion sickness, pack soda crackers and plain oatmeal for warm-blooded animals and soak bread in water for the cold-blooded variety.

Martz addresses health concerns, preparing pets for traveling in a crate, pet (and owner) etiquette, modes of travel both domestic and international, and entertaining your pet once you get to your

destination.

If you're short on ideas about where to travel with Fido, Martz has a few dozen suggestions, from hotels and resorts to campgrounds and dog camps. But, again, the how is what sets this book apart. For example, here's a tip from Martz for owners whose dogs like to swim. "Before allowing your dog in the water, soak her fur with a natural pet cream rinse or leave-in conditioner mixed with water. When your dog dries off, she will be tangle free and will smell and feel like she just had a bath."

The 45 pages of resources at the back are worth the price alone. A timetable of "things to do before traveling" starts at least seven months before a trip, if flying internationally, and includes everything from vet checkups to crate labeling. Martz also lists which airlines accept pets in the cabin, as of 2008 publication.



I'll be sure to refer to Martz's book before the girls and I hit the road again.

Diane Daniel can be reached at [diane@bydianedaniel.com](#).