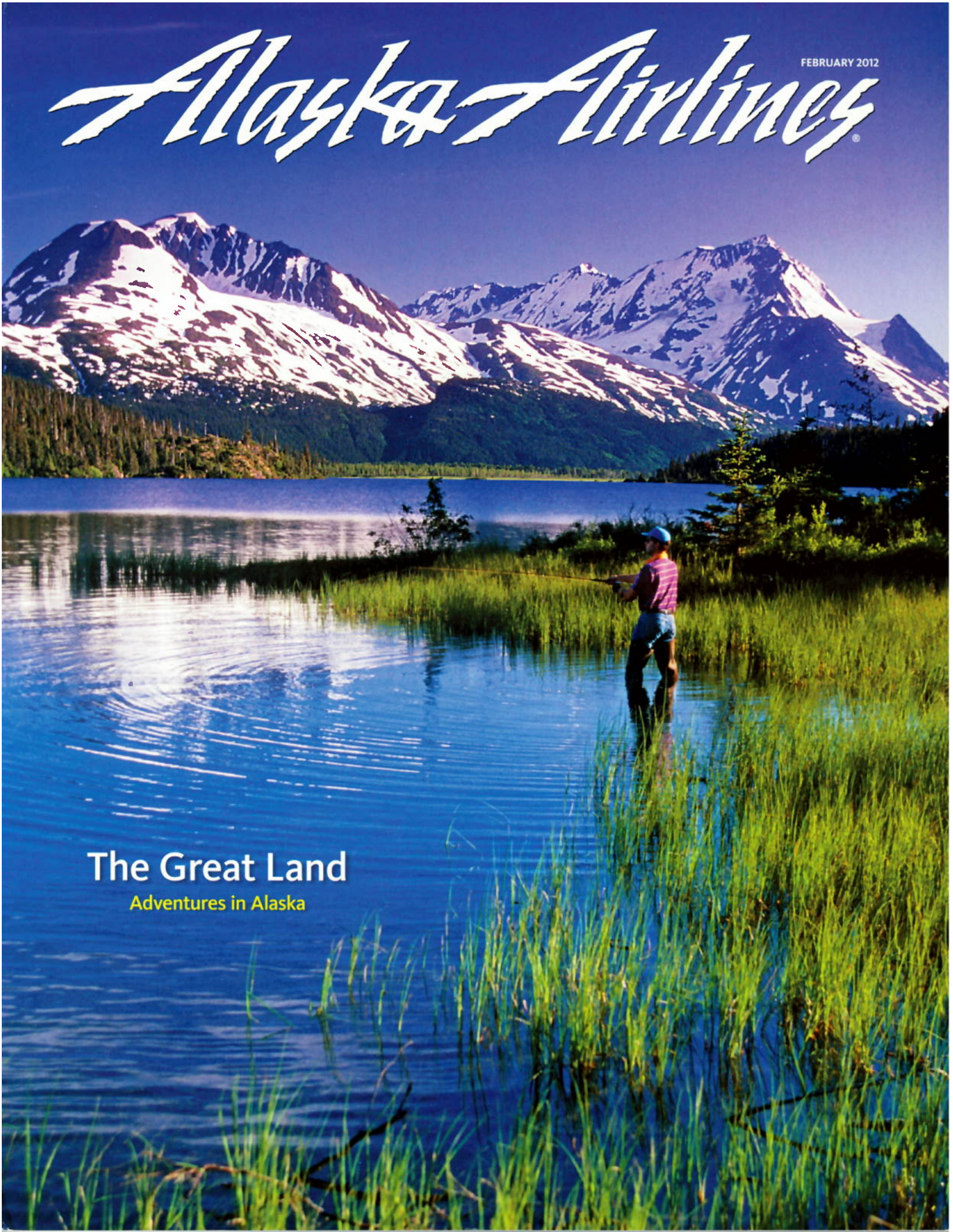
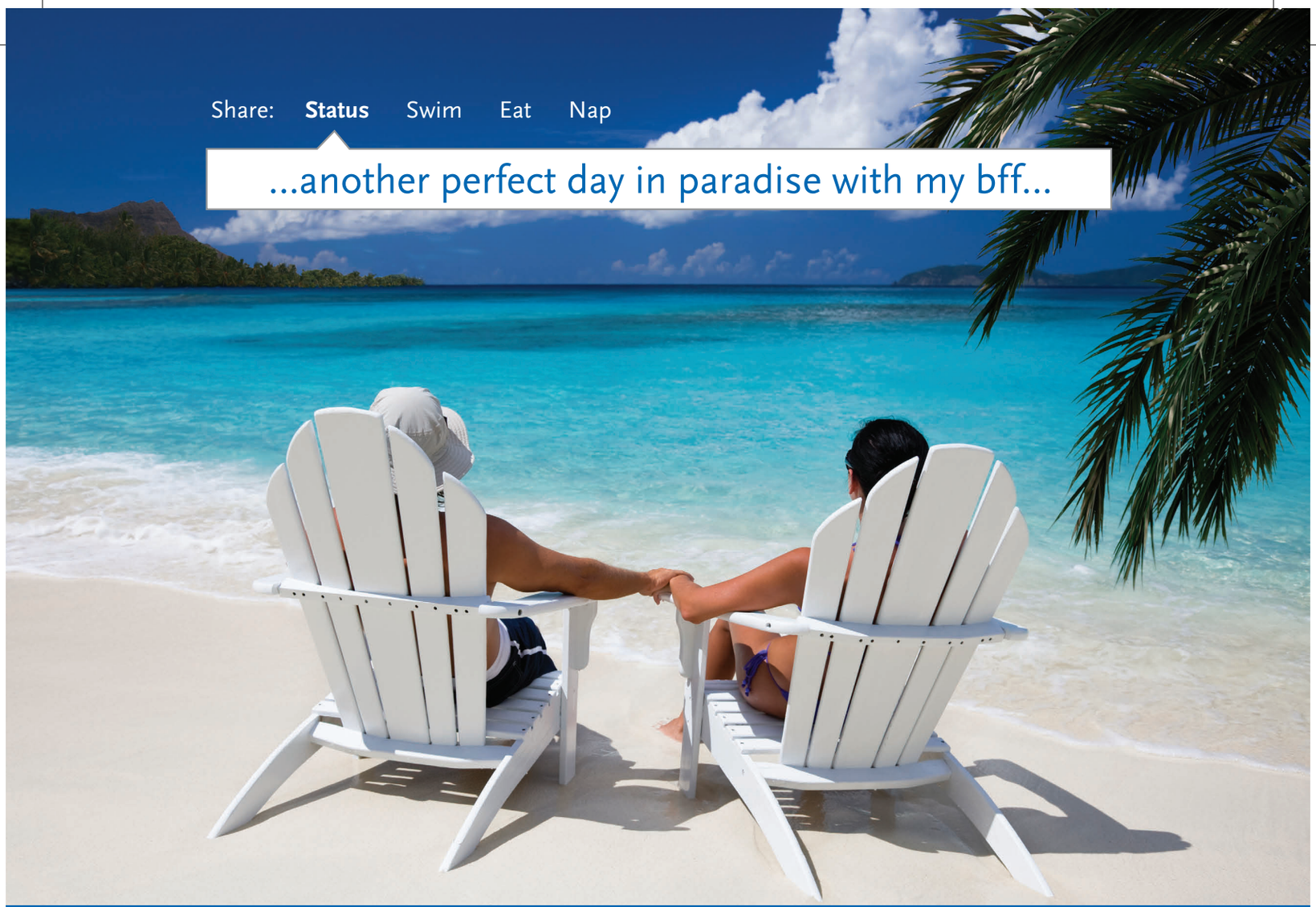
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Dick Hannah

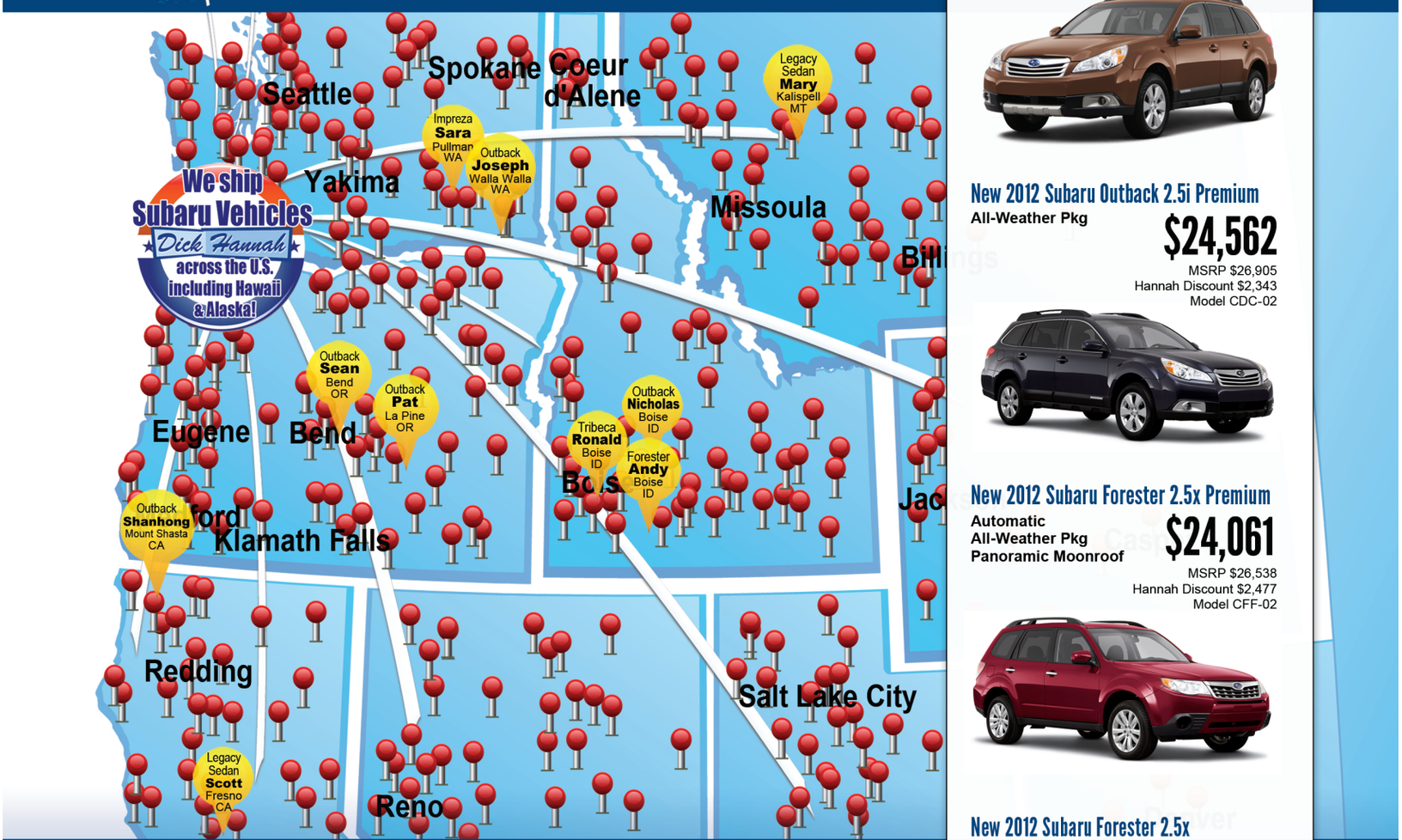
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★★★★★ **Dora E.**—After weeks of research, I finally narrowed down my car choice to a Subaru Forester. While Vancouver is a slight drive for me, they seemed to have the best reviews, the best selection, and the best prices. After a successful test drive I was ready to buy. I drove home with a car that I absolutely love. I have to say that with the Customer for Life program, and the great service I have already received, I am looking forward to taking it back for services.

★★★★★ **Lisa T.**—Looked at all of the Subaru dealers in Portland and ended up going to Vancouver Dick Hannah Subaru for the best deal. Chris in internet sales was great to give me information before I came in to the dealership. Huyen walked us through the test drive and Kenny got all of the finance together for us. We wanted a green Subaru Outback with a moonroof and they got one from Seattle and had it delivered the next day! We love driving it and the entire interaction at the dealership was totally pleasant. We would recommend them to others.

★★★★★ **Amy J.**—We recently traded in a car and brought home a truck. The on-line customer service at Dick Hannah Subaru was what first brought us in. They provided a trade-in range (which they honored) while giving us used car options that met our needs for price and what we wanted to buy. They were then very responsive in getting back to us. We drove four hours due to this great service. When we are ready to purchase a new car we will make the four hour drive again because we know we'll be treated well, provided great service and quality cars.

★★★★★ **Brandon J.**—I would recommend Dick Hannah Subaru to anyone looking for a new car. Not only was Ron friendly, they gave me the best price by far. I never even haggled over the first quote because I couldn't get a dealer within 100 miles to match the price.I drove 85 miles to buy my car from them and would recommend anyone to do the same.

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Alaska Airlines MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2012

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Cover: The Kenai Peninsula is one of many great places to fish in Alaska. See "An Extraordinary Catch" starting on page 90; photo by Jeff Schultz/alaskastock.com. **Contents (clockwise from top):** Wildflowers bloom in California's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, within the Sonoran Desert; see "Desert Allure," starting on page 34. Passengers can cruise the Spokane River aboard the *Red Lion River Queen*, a sternwheeler once used on the Mississippi River; see "Historical Treasures," starting on page S6. Roses are a popular gift on Valentine's Day; see "Journal," starting on page 18.

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FEBRUARY 2012
VOLUME 36, NUMBER 2

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Alaska Airlines Magazine (ISSN 0199-0586), the monthly in-flight magazine of Alaska Airlines, is published by Paradigm Communications Group, at 2701 First Avenue, Suite 250, Seattle, WA 98121.

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Subscriptions: $65 in the U.S.; $70 elsewhere. Single-copy price: $8. Photocopies of articles: $3.50. Publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Printed in the United States of America.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Alaska Airlines Magazine*, 2701 First Avenue, Suite 250, Seattle, WA 98121-1123.

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Winter Survival



Bill Ayer
Chairman and CEO

This month, I've asked Joe Sprague, our vice president of marketing, to talk about the great getaways we offer south of the border. Joe lives in Seattle and has spent time in Alaska, so he knows a thing or two about beating the cold. *—Bill Ayer, chairman and CEO*

To Bear Grylls of Discovery Channel fame, winter survival means digging an ice cave, stuffing wood chips into his shirt to keep his core temperature up and eating frozen bugs. For the rest of us, who enjoy watching Bear from the comfort of our easy chairs, winter survival can be as effortless as an Alaska Airlines trip to Mexico.

With the temps still low in many parts of the United States this month, there's no better way to escape the final stages of Ol' Man Winter than a three- or four-day getaway to Mexico. And with more flights from the West Coast to Mexico than any other carrier, Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air can whisk you to a warm beach in about the same amount of time it takes Bear to dig an ice cave.



Alaska Airlines offers nine destinations for warm-weather getaways to Mexico.

Alaska has served Mexico since 1988. We fly an average of 1 million passengers a year to this warm-weather country, serving seven of its top resorts, as well as Mexico City and Guadalajara. You'll find sunny days on soft, sandy beaches, but also significant archaeological, architectural and cultural attractions. And some fun and adventure, too.

Alaska flies nonstop to Mexico from Seattle, the Bay Area, Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Diego. With connections from the state of Alaska, and throughout the Northwest via Horizon Air–operated flights, Mexico is more accessible and affordable than you think.

On the Baja Peninsula, choose from Los Cabos, La Paz and Loreto—all distinct but offering a common charm. Los Cabos is the more cosmopolitan, with world-class shopping, dining and nightlife. Divers and snorkelers favor La Paz for its abundant sea life and close proximity to Todos Santos, an artists' mecca. And Loreto, which locals refer to as "where the mountains come to swim," is home to the beautifully restored Mission San Javier, high in the mountains.

Farther south, on the Mexico mainland, are the time-honored destinations of Manzanillo, Mazatlán and Puerto Vallarta. Manzanillo has a rich colonial heritage dating to the time of Cortés. It's also a top golf destination and equally famous for deep-sea fishing. Mazatlán is all about beaches and beautiful sunsets—with a must-see downtown historical district. You can also take a tropical canopy tour of the jungle via zipline.

Puerto Vallarta is full of arts and culture, and fronted by a newly renovated *malecón*—or waterfront esplanade. It's also a launch point for discovering the small fishing village of La Cruz, the surfers' paradise of Sayulita, and Punta Mita at the end of Banderas Bay.

Farther south still are the idyllic towns of Ixtapa and Zihuatanejo—a true tale of two cities. Ixtapa offers grand resorts alongside a picture-perfect coastline, where you can soak in the sun or swim with the dolphins. Zihuatanejo, in contrast, boasts quiet beaches with boutique resorts, and a charming fishing harbor, where locals and tourists mingle over fresh seafood lunches.

Booking a trip to Mexico is as close as your computer and alaskaair.com. We offer specials and last-minute getaways, so it's never too late to plan a trip. Our vacation packages include airfare and hotel accommodations for any number of nights, and you can purchase transfers to and from the airport, and your choice of tours and attractions. Our hotels range from budget to lavish, and all are hand-selected for their location, amenities and service. Now that's a deal that may get even Bear out of the cold.

Thanks for considering an Alaska Airlines trip to Mexico for your winter survival and, as always, thanks for flying with us. *—Joe Sprague*

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Sobrevivir en el invierno



Bill Ayer
Presidente Ejecutivo y
Jefe Ejecutivo

Este mes, le solicité a Joe Sprague, nuestro Vicepresidente de Marketing, que hable sobre las fabulosas escapadas que ofrecemos hacia el sur de la frontera. Joe vive en Seattle y ha pasado algún tiempo en Alaska, por lo que sabe un par de cosas sobre cómo vencer el frío. *—Bill Ayer, Presidente Ejecutivo y Jefe Ejecutivo*

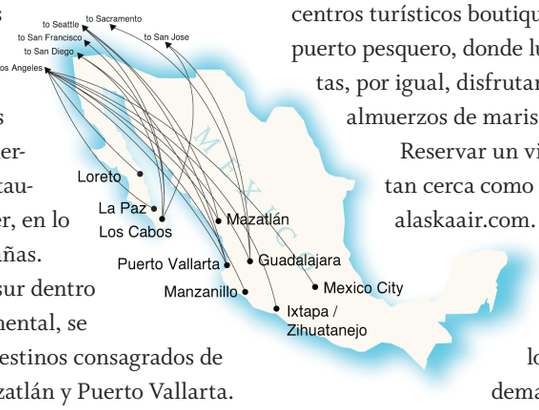
Para el famoso Bear Grylls de Discovery Channel, sobrevivir en el invierno significa cavar una cueva en el hielo, rellenar su camisa con virutas de madera para mantener su temperatura central elevada, y alimentarse de insectos congelados. Para el resto de nosotros, que disfrutamos de ver a Bear desde la comodidad de nuestro sillón, sobrevivir en el invierno puede ser tan fácil como viajar a México en Alaska Airlines.

Con las temperaturas de este mes que continuarán bajas en muchas partes del país, no hay mejor manera de escapar de las etapas finales del señor invierno que una escapada de tres o cuatro días a México. Y por ser la compañía con más vuelos desde la costa oeste a México que cualquier otra, Alaska Airlines y Horizon Air pueden llevarle a una cálida playa en casi la misma cantidad de tiempo que le llevaría a Bear cavar una cueva en el hielo.

Alaska Airlines vuela a México desde 1988. Trasladamos un promedio de 1 millón de pasajeros por año a siete de sus centros turísticos más exclusivos, así como a Ciudad de México y a Guadalajara. Se encontrará con días soleados en playas de arenas suaves, pero, además, descubrirá una gran cantidad de atractivos arqueológicos, arquitectónicos y culturales. Como así también algo de diversión y aventura.

Alaska ofrece vuelos sin escalas a México desde Seattle, el Área de la Bahía, Los Ángeles y San Diego. Por sus conexiones desde el estado de Alaska, y todo el noroeste del Pacífico a través de los vuelos operados por Horizon Air, México es más accesible y asequible de lo que usted cree.

En la península de Baja California, elija entre La Paz, Los Cabos y Loreto, todos destinos diferentes, pero con un mismo encanto. Los Cabos es la ciudad más cosmopolita por sus tiendas, restaurantes y vida nocturna de primer nivel. Quienes disfrutan de practicar buceo y esnórquel prefieren La Paz por su exuberante vida marina y su cercanía a Todos Santos, una meca del artista. Y en Loreto, denominada por los lugareños como "el lugar donde nadan las montañas", es donde reside la hermosa Misión restaurada de San Javier, en lo alto de las montañas.



Más hacia el sur dentro de México continental, se encuentran los destinos consagrados de Manzanillo, Mazatlán y Puerto Vallarta. Manzanillo cuenta con un rico patrimonio colonial que data de los tiempos de Cortés. Además, es un exclusivo destino para la práctica de golf e igualmente famoso por la pesca en alta mar. El principal encanto de Mazatlán son sus playas y sus hermosas puestas de sol, así como el imperdible casco histórico en el centro de la ciudad. Además, puede hacer un recorrido de canopy tropical por la selva en una tirolesa.

Puerto Vallarta desborda de arte y cultura, y cuenta con el recientemente renovado malecón, también conocido como explanada costera. Además, es un punto de partida para descubrir la pequeña aldea de pescadores llamada La Cruz; el paraíso de los surfistas, Sayulita; y en el extremo de la bahía, Punta Mita.

Aún más al sur se encuentran los idílicos destinos de Ixtapa y Zihuatanejo. Ixtapa, una verdadera historia de dos ciudades, ofrece fabulosos centros turísticos a lo largo de una costa con una belleza digna de una postal, donde usted puede disfrutar del sol o nadar con delfines. Zihuatanejo contrasta por sus playas tranquilas con centros turísticos boutique y un precioso puerto pesquero, donde lugareños y turistas, por igual, disfrutan de los deliciosos almuerzos de mariscos frescos.

Reservar un viaje a México está tan cerca como su computadora y alaskaair.com. Tenemos ofertas especiales y escapadas de última hora; por lo tanto, nunca es demasiado tarde para planificar un viaje. Nuestros paquetes de vacaciones incluyen el pasaje aéreo, el alojamiento en hotel por cualquier cantidad de noches, los traslados hacia y desde el aeropuerto, y las visitas guiadas y atractivos que elija. Nuestros hoteles varían desde los más económicos hasta los más lujosos, y todos se elijen según la ubicación, las comodidades y los servicios. Esta oferta podría rescatar hasta al mismísimo Bear del frío.

Gracias por pensar en un viaje a México en Alaska Airlines para sobrevivir en el invierno y, como siempre, gracias por volar con nosotros. *—Joe Sprague*

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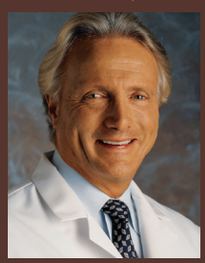
Judy Crane, business executive, wife, and mother, thought she was pretty fit. But when she decided to improve even further, she was amazed at how much she could accomplish with MY BEST 10.

Sure, I thought I was fairly fit. I worked out a couple of times a week. But when the experts at My Best 10 tested me, I discovered that I had 30 percent body fat! I guess I had a lot more to learn about taking care of myself. My diet had been really poor because of comfort foods like pasta, waffles, and wine, and though I didn't want to admit it, at 51 years old, I had developed a little muffin top around my middle.

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Alaska Airlines is excited to announce the addition of Starbucks® coffee to our beverage lineup. Starbucks has always been a place where you can find the world's best coffees. And while it may have started with just one store in Seattle's historic Pike Place Market back in 1971, it has grown to become a beacon for coffee lovers and enthusiasts everywhere. Starbucks takes great care with every single bean they sell, starting with ethically sourcing some of the finest coffee beans, expertly roasting them, and helping to improve the lives of the people who grow them. Now you can get that same expertise and quality that's become so popular across the world in every freshly brewed cup we offer on Alaska Airlines.

New Boeing Sky Interior To Enhance Alaska's Fleet

This month, Alaska Airlines introduces the innovative Boeing Sky Interior on two new 737-800s. Using design elements derived from the 787, the Sky Interior features pivoting overhead bins, larger window recesses and adjustable lighting based on different phases of flight. The new design is intended to give the cabin a more open and spacious feel. All of Alaska's new 737-800 and 737-900ER aircraft will feature the Sky Interior.



Alaska Announces New Regional Service

Starting June 4, 2012, Alaska Airlines will begin new service between several cities along the U.S. West Coast:



- San Diego and Fresno, California, *twice daily*
- San Diego and Monterey, California, *once daily*
- San Diego and Santa Rosa, California, *once daily*
- San Jose and Reno, Nevada, *twice daily*
- Portland and Bozeman, Montana, *seasonal and once daily*
- Portland and Bellingham, Washington, *seasonal and once daily*
- Portland and Santa Barbara, California, *seasonal and once daily*

The Portland–Santa Barbara flights will be operated by SkyWest Airlines, while the other new flights will be operated by Horizon Air. Visit alaskaair.com for easy booking and great low fares.

Focus on the Environment

Measuring Our Recycling Progress

A handful of committed Alaska employees recently gathered in a catering kitchen near Seattle-Tacoma International Airport to sift through trash and determine exactly how well Alaska's inflight recycling program is progressing. The results of this and other audits indicate that Alaska employees and customers collected 49 percent of recyclable waste in 2011, up from 44 percent in 2010. The airline's goal is 70 percent for 2012. Please continue to assist us inflight by separating trash from recyclables before handing them to flight attendants.



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Inspector General



Rick Migliacio
Alaska Airlines Legend

Each year, Alaska Airlines recognizes a handful of its most celebrated employees as Customer Service Legends—the airline's highest honor. We invite you to enjoy learning about one of our Legends, Line Inspector Trainer Rick Migliacio.

Rick Migliacio is a master at borescopic inspections. And ultrasonic inspections, eddy-current inspections, magnetic-particle inspections and liquid-penetrant inspections. Whether inspecting jet engines or passenger-jet airframes, Rick knows the technical procedures and services that keep the airline's fleet of 117 Boeing 737s in top form. Working in Alaska Airlines' maintenance hangars at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, he is not only a quality-control inspector, he also trains a corps of line technicians on the safety and performance inspections that are helping the airline to win widespread recognition for its safety procedures and industry-leading on-time performance.

A borescope is just one of his tools. It's a $45,000 instrument that allows inspectors such as Rick to peer deep into the inner workings of a jet engine to evaluate wear and damage. An inspector needs to know what to look for and how to interpret the images projected on the borescope screen.

Rick's knowledge and resourcefulness have paid off for the company. For example, when new borescope-inspection procedures introduced for some engines seemed too complicated, Rick found a better way.

"Rick has been recognized as an expert in the art of borescoping engines, not just by Alaska Airlines, but by the manufacturer, for developing and adopting new techniques to improve the process," says Vince Hasson, director of quality control at Alaska. "His improvements are now being used throughout the industry."

Rick is also spreading that expertise at the airline, teaching classes that certify technicians at other airport facilities to do inspections that previously might have required the airline to take a plane out of service for days. Ten years ago, Alaska Airlines had two stations certified to do such inspections; it now has five. The result is enhanced safety and fewer flight delays and cancellations.

Rick got his aviation-career started in Illinois before moving to Portland and Horizon Air in 1984. After about five years with Horizon as an airframe and power plant technician, and gaining experience with jet engines, he transferred to Alaska Airlines and its Seattle facilities.

When he's not working, Rick is most likely on his boat with his wife, Shawn, an administrative assistant who's been with Horizon Air for 14 years. They're avid anglers who spend weekends boating on Puget Sound, often motoring out of Neah Bay to their favorite halibut fishing spots.

While Rick enjoys his role as a teacher, he still likes to get his hands dirty in the shop, working with the other technicians.

"Safe and compliant is No. 1 for us and Rick goes above and beyond for us in that regard," says Scott Miller, manager of quality control. "The personal time and effort he puts into his training programs is giving us greater flexibility in maintaining and scheduling the fleet, and that is a huge benefit to our customers." —*Paul Frichtl*

Volunteer Spirit

Team Building

Rick Pykkonen, a project manager who's been with Alaska Airlines for 19 years, is also a for-charity walker, organizer and fundraiser. For the last several years he has volunteered with a team of airline employees who take up the American Cancer Society challenge to walk for 24 hours straight in a team relay called Relay for Life. In 2010, he co-captained the team, which raised nearly $5,000.

Relay for Life was started in 1985 by a Tacoma physician and is now a national event involving 3.5 million people in 5,000 communities around the United States.



Relay for Life team co-captains Jean Whiteley and Rick Pykkonen.

Rick is motivated by the fact that several family members have been touched by cancer. Also, he appreciates the way the ACS applies the funds. "I'm all about research," he says, "but Relay also provides practical help for people with needs here and now."

Rick has also been gratified by the opportunity to involve his children in Relay: His daughter raised $60 by selling her hand-knitted cellphone holders. —*P.F.*

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JOURNAL



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Japanese art in the Deco style, such as *Junpū* (*Fair Wind*), painted by Miki Suizan in 1933, often depicts the *moga* (Japanese modern girl).

NEW YORK, NY

ART DECO IN JAPAN, 1920–1945

THE PARIS-BORN ART DECO movement popular during the 1920s, '30s and '40s influenced art and design in countries throughout the world, including Japan. An exhibit opening March 16 at the Japan Society focuses on the little-known style of Japanese Art Deco, which often depicts the *moga* (Japanese modern girl). "Deco Japan: Shaping Art and Culture, 1920–1945" showcases 200 works—including sculpture, ceramics, furniture, jewelry, prints and more—on loan from the Levenson Collection, one of the world's premier collections of Japanese Art Deco works. "Deco Japan" will be on display through June 10.

For more information, call 212-832-1155 or visit www.japansociety.org. —*Kaitlin Ryan*

An estimated 196 million roses were grown for Valentine's Day 2011, according to the Society of American Florists. The society reports that Valentine's Day ranks No. 1 among holidays in the purchase of fresh flowers.



AROUND THE ROUTE SYSTEM

Gardens in Bloom

Whether you grow flowers and other plants on a tiny balcony or in a spacious suburban yard, you'll find inspiration for creative gardening at upcoming shows throughout the United States.

Seattle's Northwest Flower & Garden Show, co-sponsored by Alaska Airlines, runs February 8–12 at the Washington State Convention & Trade Center. More than 20 display gardens, created by some of the region's most respected garden designers and landscapers, will give attendees ideas for outdoor living, edible gardening, sustainable gardening and more. In addition, more than 300 local and national plant, garden and outdoor-living vendors will present the latest products for your yard. In keeping with the theme of this year's show, "A Floral Symphony," live classical music will be performed at select times. For more information, visit www.gardenshow.com.

In the Windy City, the theme of the 2012 Chicago Flower & Garden Show, March 10–18 at Navy Pier, is "Hort Couture." Visitors can tour 25-plus garden displays created to reflect the influence of fashion on floral, plant and landscape creations, and can browse tools and accessories from more than 100 exhibitors. Annual highlights include an "activity garden" for kids and the Garden Gourmet Series, during which several well-known local chefs will share tasty recipes featuring garden-grown ingredients. For more information, visit www.chicagoflower.com.

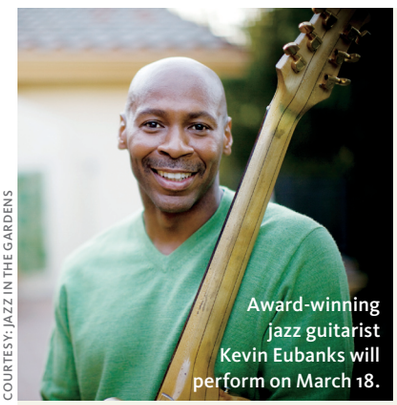


COURTESY: NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

Water features and container gardens add visual interest to displays at the Northwest Flower & Garden Show.

Back on the West Coast, the San Francisco Flower & Garden Show, March 21–25 at the San Mateo Event Center, will focus on "Gardens for a Green Earth." Twenty display gardens, as well as additional container and edible gardens, will increase awareness of water conservation, native-plant gardening and small-space modular gardens. The show will also offer green-gardening seminars by local experts and highlight new products designed to protect the environment. For more information, visit www.sfgardenshow.com. —*Kaitlin Ryan*

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COURTESY: JAZZ IN THE GARDENS

Award-winning jazz guitarist Kevin Eubanks will perform on March 18.

MIAMI GARDENS, FL

Two Days of Great Jazz

More than 10 well-known artists—including Mary J. Blige, Kenny G, Patti LaBelle and former *Tonight Show* bandleader Kevin Eubanks—will take the stage during the seventh-annual Jazz in the Gardens music festival, March 17 and 18 at Sun Life Stadium. In addition to listening to a mix of musical genres—ranging from jazz to rhythm-and-blues to worldbeat—visitors can enjoy a variety of dishes from many countries, including the Bahamas, China, Haiti and Jamaica. Last year, attendance at the festival numbered more than 45,000, a new record. The city of Miami Gardens is about 10 miles north of Miami.

For more information, call 877-640-5299 or visit www.jazzinthegardens.com. —*Cindy Tyler*

On February 7, 1964, The Beatles touched down in New York City to begin a two-week U.S. visit that also took them to Washington, D.C. and Miami. The Fab Four's February 9 performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* was watched by a then world-record-setting 73 million viewers.



COURTESY: PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM

Visitors to the Petersen Automotive Museum on March 3 can admire hundreds of 1932 Fords.

LOS ANGELES, CA

Little Deuce Coupes

Car lovers will celebrate 80 years of the 1932 Ford—known as a "Deuce," and the inspiration of the classic 1963 Beach Boys' song *Little Deuce Coupe*—at the Petersen Automotive Museum's Deuce Day Car Show, March 3. The first V-8-powered vehicle available at an affordable price, the '32 Ford quickly rose to popularity after its release, with hot-rodders often stripping weight off the car and souping up its engine. More than 400 of the vintage vehicles will be displayed in the museum's parking lot during the show, and several vendors specializing in parts for '32 Fords will be in attendance. Visitors can also see multiple Deuces inside the museum, through March 25.

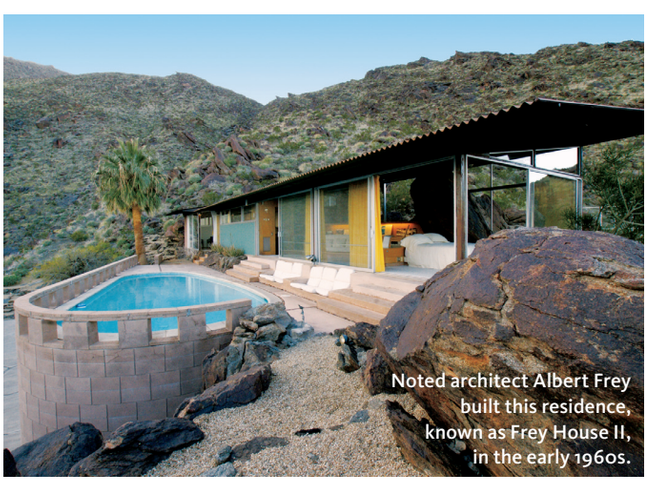
"The 1932 Ford has been a huge part of the hot-rodding community and the automotive culture of Southern California for 80 years," says Buddy Pepp, executive director of the Petersen Automotive Museum. "Few man-made products can boast of that kind of following." For more information, call 323-930-2277 or visit www.petersen.org. —*Cindy Tyler*

PALM SPRINGS, CA

DESERT DWELLINGS

MIDCENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE—a style known for its clean lines and blending of indoor and outdoor spaces—was especially popular in the Coachella Valley, where the desert landscapes inspired many architects and designers. Today, Palm Springs is home to one of the world's largest concentrations of Midcentury Modern homes and buildings. Participants in Palm Spring's Modernism Week, February 16–26, will have an opportunity to visit some of the city's most recognizable Midcentury structures, and learn more about this enduring architectural style, during more than 80 events, including tours, lectures, parties and film screenings. The Midcentury design aesthetic extends to furniture, cars and even travel trailers—all of which will be on display.

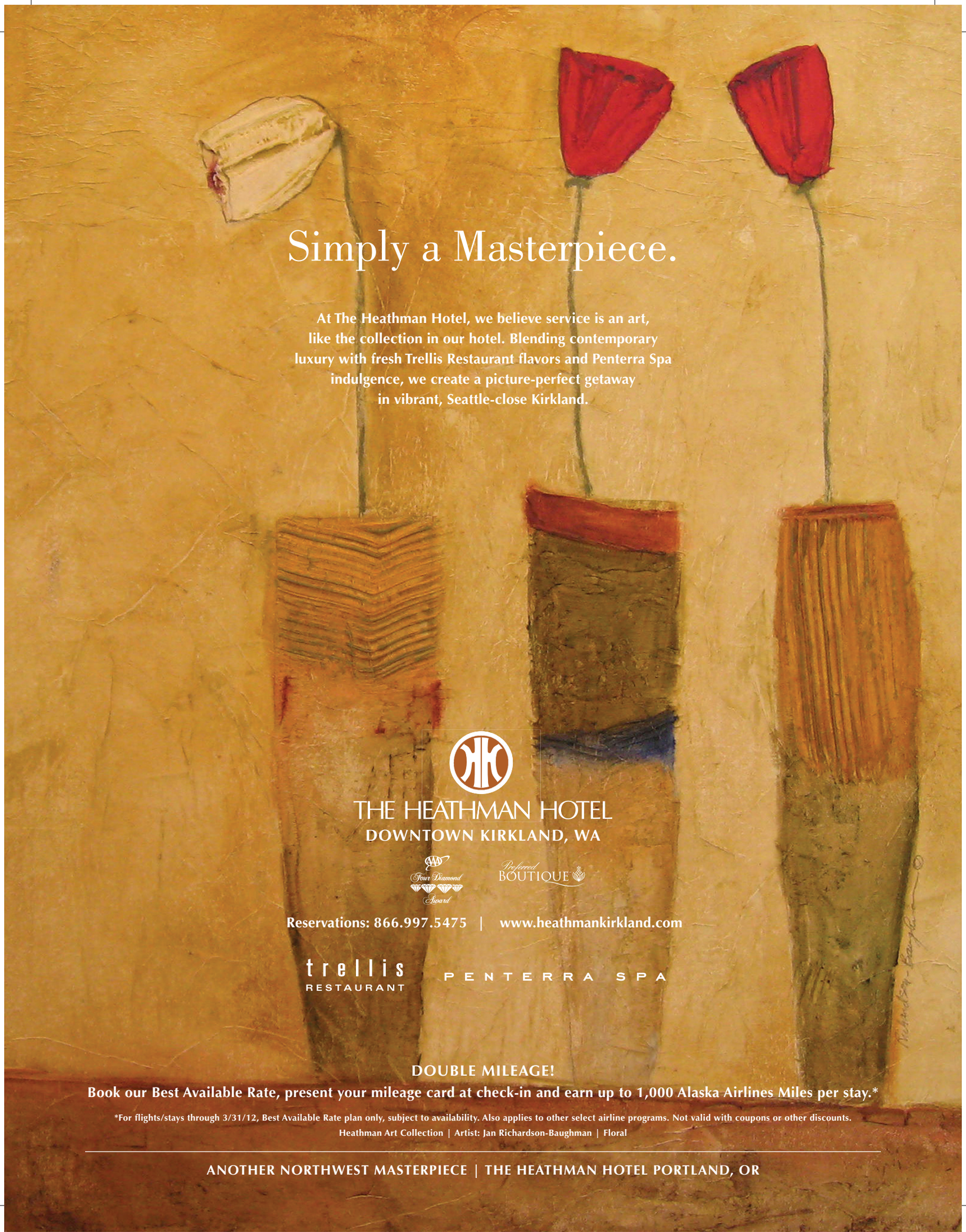
For more information, visit www.modernismweek.com. —*Monica Hodge*



GREGG FELSEN

Noted architect Albert Frey built this residence, known as Frey House II, in the early 1960s.

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COURTESY: RODEO AUSTIN

A barrel racer rounds a corner at the 2011 Rodeo Austin.

AUSTIN, TX

Texas-Style Rodeo Excitement

One of the world's largest indoor professional rodeos, Rodeo Austin, will celebrate its 75th anniversary next month. The 15-day rodeo—being held at the Travis County Exposition Center, March 10–24—attracts top cowboys and cowgirls from all over North America, who participate in seven events, including barrel racing, team roping and bull riding. The total purse is more than $400,000.

Additional entertainment is available for the whole family. After each day's rodeo, the arena is transformed into a concert pavilion, where popular artists such as Demi Lovato (March 13) and Glen Campbell (March 18) will perform. The Rodeo Austin Fair—featuring carnival games, rides, livestock shows and more—will offer lively fun on the exposition-center grounds, March 9–24. Barbecue aficionados will want to visit the southwest corner of the fairgrounds on March 16 and 17, when 40 of the nation's finest BBQ teams will compete in several cook-off categories, including Best Brisket, Best Ribs and Best Southern Hospitality.

Since its inception, Rodeo Austin has awarded more than $5 million in college scholarships to deserving Texas students. For more information, call 512-919-3000 or visit www.rodeoaustin.com. —*Monica Hodge*

ATLANTA, GA

Golf in Art

Golf has been a beloved sport for several centuries, as a new exhibition opening February 5 at the High Museum of Art shows. "The Art of Golf" explores the game through diverse golf-themed works of art, created from the 1700s to the present. The exhibit is organized chronologically, beginning with early works showing Dutch "kolf"—a form of golf played on the ice—including *The Ringball Player*, a 1654 etching by Rembrandt. Also featured are early portraits of golfers from the National Galleries of Scotland, and other Scottish works from the 18th century; objects on loan from the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in St Andrews, Scotland, such as a 1903 portrait of Old Tom Morris by Sir George Reid; and Charles Lees' famous painting *The Golfers* (1847), which depicts a golf match at St Andrews and is making its first appearance in the United States. Twentieth century pieces include works by Norman Rockwell and Andy Warhol, while a newly commissioned series of aerial photographs captures the beauty of iconic Scottish golf links. A special area is dedicated to legendary American golfer and Atlanta native Robert Tyre "Bobby" Jones Jr. (1902–1971), who helped popularize the game internationally and in 1930 won the "Grand Slam" of golf of his era.

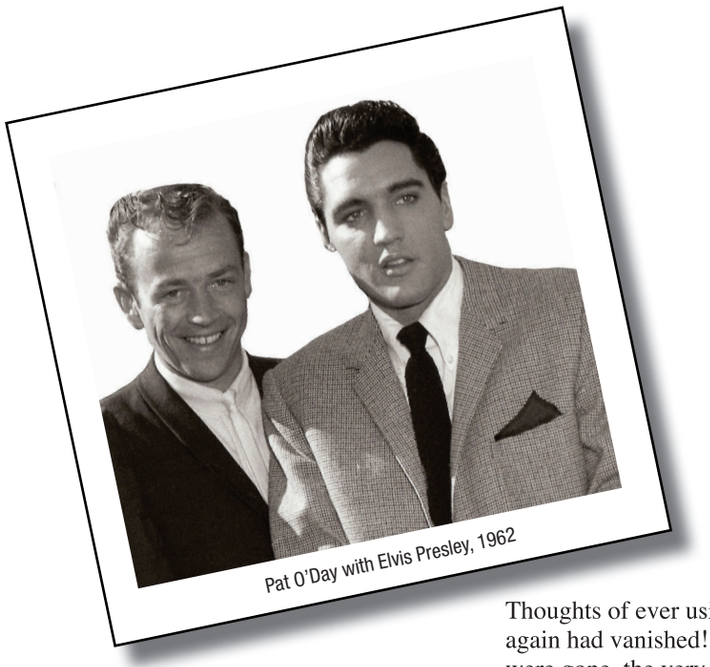


© NATIONAL GALLERIES OF SCOTLAND. PHOTO BY ANTONIA REEVE

Charles Lees' *The Golfers* will make its U.S. debut as part of "The Art of Golf," opening February 5 at the High Museum.

"'The Art of Golf' brings rare and sometimes whimsical works together into an artistic narrative exploring the history of the sport," says Michael E. Shapiro, the High Museum's Nancy and Holcombe T. Green Jr. director. For more information, call 404-733-4444 or visit www.high.org. —*Monica Hodge*

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Pat O'Day with Elvis Presley, 1962

HOW CAN IT BE?

I'm Pat O'Day and how could I have known it was in my genes to become an alcoholic? My father was a minister, and my parents never consumed alcohol. But when I entered the world of rock & roll, first as a disc jockey, performing on the air in Seattle for many years, and later as a concert promoter, regular drinking with artists, friends, or by myself, became part of my life. It just didn't seem to be a bad thing.

My career was going well. I was a top rated deejay in Seattle. The company I founded, Concerts West had become the Worlds largest in concert promotion. I counted among my friends Seattle's Jimi Hendrix, the guys in Zeppelin, and The Beach Boys. We also handled tours for Elvis, Sinatra, Neil Diamond, Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Moody Blues, Linda Ronstadt, The Eagles, and many more. What fun it was! But it also took its toll.

At age 52, I still didn't think anything was wrong with me. But some good friends insisted I needed help with my "drinking problem." That's how I became acquainted with Seattle's medical breakthrough for alcohol and drug addictions, Seattle's Schick Shadel Hospital.

You see, I agreed to enter Schick Shadel because their treatment takes only ten days. That way my friends would be satisfied, get off my back, and in a couple of weeks I'd be out and back to drinking. What a surprise awaited me.

Ten days later I walked out of the hospital door saying to myself, "How can it be?" Thoughts of ever using alcohol or drugs again had vanished! Craving and desires were gone, the very thought of ever drinking again was now repugnant.

I accepted it, not fully understanding what had happened inside my brain to bring about this monumental change. It's now been over 25 years since that day, living my life around others who drink and use all sorts of things. I'm never tempted for a moment. After treatment I attended no meetings, received no counseling, I'm simply sober for life!

Since then, my experience convinced numerous friends and family members (genes, again!) to enter Schick Shadel, so they could enjoy the same success. Personally seeing the treatment working over and over again led me to join Jim Graham, a Texas oilman, and nine other former patients in buying the hospital nine years ago.

"How does it work?" I'll now give you the answer. Dr. Shadel once said, "We've been doing it all wrong!" And he was right! Dr. Shadel recognized what so many had missed: The conscious portion of our brain, that portion occupied now as you read this article, is rarely capable of erasing addictions. Alcohol and drugs have powers that overcome logic, willpower, faith, demands, threats, and even punishment. The cravings are brain based conditioned responses, life long unless medically treated.

Dr. Shadel knew that the most powerful part of the human brain was the subconscious and said, "Let's attack it!" He successfully did, and his hospital has been doing so ever since, with more than 50,000 people treated nationwide by his formula. It simply stops addiction in its tracks, and that healing lasts a lifetime. Thus, Schick Shadel proudly boasts the highest long-term success rate of any treatment facility in the world.

What makes this treatment so successful? The subconscious is reprogrammed with two separate, highly effective measures on alternating days. Sedation interview therapy helps patients put aside fears, guilt, and problems created by the addiction. Its cleansing effect is responsible for the freshness of thought and attitude when leaving the hospital.

The other high impact portion of the treatment is called Chemical Counter Conditioning Therapy. Pavlovian in nature, it causes the patient to despise the sight, taste, and smell of the substance for which they're being treated. The combination of these two treatments causes the ever so powerful subconscious to overcome the thoughts of the conscious, resulting in a total rejection of further use. Two reinforcing booster sessions, lasting two days each, occur 30 and 90 days following the initial treatments.

For the past nine years, I've been the radio and television voice of Seattle's Schick Shadel Hospital, proud and passionate in telling the story. And why not! It saves lives and families, and for me, it gets no better than that! It also brings to mind a great Elvis song I heard and watched him sing so many times. "It's now or never!"

SCHICK SHADEL HOSPITAL

Schick Shadel Hospital is at *schickshadel.com* or by phone 1-800-CRAVING (1-800-272-8464).

Schick Shadel is a Washington State licensed alcoholism & drug treatment hospital.

The above photo of Pat O'Day with Elvis in no way implies an endorsement of Schick Shadel Hospital by the late Elvis Presley nor his estate and is for O'Days historic purposes only.

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RUDY BOU CHEBEL, COURTESY: SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Lebanese director and actress Nadine Labaki's *Where Do We Go Now?* is one of many acclaimed films that moviegoers can see at the Portland International Film Festival.

PORTLAND, OR

Spectacular Cinema

Portland film fans are celebrating two milestones this month: The 35th anniversary of the Portland International Film Festival, February 9–25, and the ongoing 40th-anniversary season of the Northwest Film Center, producer of the film fest. More than 100 feature, documentary, locally made and other movies will be screened at multiple venues during the festival. Some of the most eagerly anticipated films have been selected as their countries' submissions to the 2012 Academy Awards' Best Foreign Language Film category, including *Where Do We Go Now?* (Lebanon) and *Declarations of Independence* (France). The Portland International Film Festival will also feature programs highlighting its history.

The Northwest Film Center–produced Portland Jewish Film Festival will celebrate its 20th anniversary April 15–29. For more information about both festivals, call 503-221-1156 or visit www.nwfilm.org. —*Cindy Tyler*

PROFILE

Next Stop with Jon Olson

Whether he's racing a personal watercraft across the turquoise waters off Tahiti, jumping from the top of Sun Valley, Idaho's Mount Baldy attached to a tandem parasail or sampling the Cajun-style steaks at the famous Double Musky Inn in Girdwood, Alaska, Jon Olson is living his dream—and he's doing it on camera. Olson is the host of a travel-video series called *Next Stop*, which combines his passions for travel and the performing arts. For each episode, he explores a different destination in the route system of Alaska Airlines or one of its partner airlines, interviewing local residents and tour operators about their communities. Known for his personable manner, Olson's always eager to join in the fun, and he has a knack for sharing his experiences with viewers in an inviting and accessible way.



COURTESY: THE DIGITAL STUDIO

Olson enjoys a Lunar Orbiter dessert at Seattle's Space Needle restaurant.

An accomplished musician and a big-band enthusiast, Olson got his start in TV acting in commercials in Los Angeles. In 1994, he moved to Portland—an area he fell in love with. Soon, he became a partner in a small local video-production company, The Digital Studio, and helped launch a successful evening-magazine-format show called *PDXposed*.

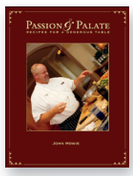
Eight years and seven Emmy nominations later, Olson says he and his team found themselves asking, "What's our next stop?" The answer came in a sponsorship agreement with Alaska Airlines. *Next Stop*—whose 30-minute episodes feature sports, adventure, music and food—is now in its second year of production. A selection of episodes is available on the airline's portable inflight entertainment system. —*Paul Frichtl*

TOP SHELF

Passion & Palate

By John Howie; ShinShinChez

This inspirational cookbook by Seattle chef John Howie features recipes from his award-winning restaurants, including Seastar and John Howie Steak, as well as recipes from his mother, to whom he attributes his passion for food. Delicious dishes such as Capellini with Mussels, Shrimp and Saffron Cream, and Mahi Mahi Ceviche with Pineapple and Sweet Onion are sure to become favorites.



—*Monica Hodge*

Ocean and Sea

By Steve Parker; Scholastic

In *Ocean and Sea*—part of Scholastic's new *Discover More* series—9- to 13-year-old readers will love learning about the world's oceans, the creatures that live in them and how humans can impact the sea. Filled with color pictures and fascinating facts, the book also includes a special code kids can use to download a free digital book to further explore the topics. —*Kaitlin Ryan*



Petal & Twig

By Valerie Easton; Sasquatch Books

Gardeners will learn to create beautiful seasonal bouquets with blossoms, branches and grasses from their yards in this lovely book featuring numerous color photographs. Even in the winter, Easton uses twigs and the most resilient plants in her yard to bring nature into her home, and *Petal & Twig* chronicles her efforts over the course of a year. Readers will also benefit from Easton's gardening and arranging tips, and a useful list of the best times to grow different plants. —*Cindy Tyler*

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Pictured "The Alaskan"

Photo By: Annie Brady

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RENDERING BY SPLIT ROCK STUDIOS

Permanent exhibits at the new center will include a 34-foot-tall sculpture made from books about the 16th president.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LEGACY

THIS MONTH, FORD'S THEATRE is opening its new Center for Education and Leadership—the last phase of a three-year, multimillion-dollar construction project that also included the restoration and renovation of the theater, and the addition of interactive exhibits to the theater's museum. Located across the street from Ford's Theatre, the Center for Education and Leadership features permanent and temporary exhibits related to Lincoln and his legacy, education studios and a distance-learning lab.

"With the addition of the Center for Education and Leadership, learners of all ages can delve deeper into our compelling American history through new exhibits, engaging videos and creative programming," says Ford's Theatre Director Paul Tetreault.

The center will host free open houses on Lincoln's birthday, February 12, and Presidents' Day, February 20. Timed-entry visits will begin February 21. Advance reservations are recommended. For more information, call 202-347-4833 or visit www.fords.org. —*Monica Hodge*

ST. LOUIS, MO

Celebrate Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras—a time of indulgence and merriment traditionally celebrated on the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent—is the inspiration for community-wide revelry in St. Louis' historic French Soulard neighborhood, February 2–21. During the first two weeks of the month, visitors can attend several culinary events, including the Taste of Soulard on February 11 and 12, during which several local restaurants will offer samples of their signature dishes. February 11 also brings the Run for Your Beads 5K, and on February 12, thousands of costumed dogs and other pets, along with their owners, will participate in one of the country's largest pet parades. Mayor Francis G. Slay and his wife, Kim, will host the 10th-annual Mayor's Masquerade Ball at City Hall on February 17, which will feature live Cajun bands and Mardi Gras–themed cuisine and drinks. Spectators lining the route of the Grand Parade, held the next day, will cheer for more than 100 floats and walking teams, who will toss necklaces made from 17 million purple, green and gold Mardi Gras beads. The top 20 floats and walking teams will appear in the illuminated Light Up the Night Fat Tuesday Parade on February 21, as it winds its way through downtown St. Louis. For more information, call 314-771-5110 or visit www.stlmardigras.org. —*Kaitlin Ryan*



KATIE REDELL

A costumed cyclist shows his Mardi Gras spirit during the Grand Parade.

CALENDAR

Through August 29 "Discovering the Civil War," Houston Museum of Natural Science; 713-639-4629 or www.hmns.org

February 7–19 *The Addams Family*, part of Broadway Across America, Shubert Theatre, Citi Performing Arts Center, Boston; www.theaddamsfamilymusicaltour.com

February 16–19 Bend Winterfest, Old Mill District, Bend, OR; www.bendwinterfest.com

February 20 Great Aloha Run, 8.15 miles, Aloha Tower to Aloha Stadium, Honolulu; 808-528-7388 or www.greataloharun.com

February 22–May 27 "Memory and Markets: Pueblo Painting in the Early 20th Century," Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; 650-723-4177 or www.museum.stanford.edu

February 23–26 Wintergrass Music Festival, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Bellevue, WA; 253-428-8056 or www.acousticsound.org

February 23–May 20 "Rembrandt and Degas: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; 212-535-7710 or www.metmuseum.org

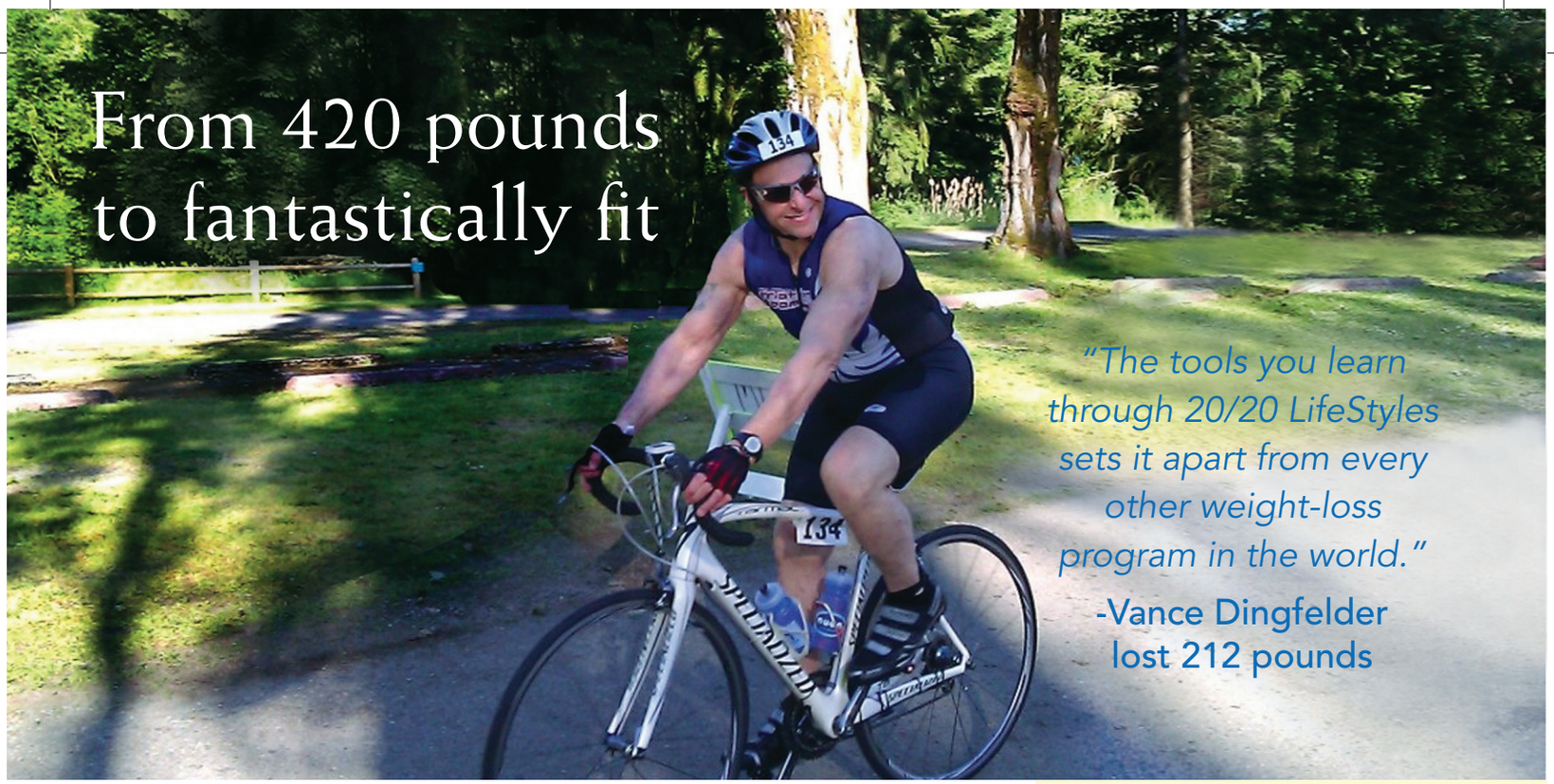
February 25–March 9 Denver Restaurant Week, multiple restaurants; 303-892-1112 or www.denver.org

February 26 61st-annual NBA All-Star Game, Amway Center, Orlando, FL; www.nba.com

March 10–July 8 "Photography in Mexico: Selected Works from the Collections of SFMOMA and Daniel Greenberg and Susan Steinhauser," San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; 415-357-4000 or www.sfmoma.org

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From 420 pounds to fantastically fit



"The tools you learn through 20/20 LifeStyles sets it apart from every other weight-loss program in the world."

-Vance Dingfelder
lost 212 pounds

Three years ago, Vance Dingfelder couldn't walk from the corner of the block to his house without stopping to rest. Now this picture-of-health triathlete has overcome a lifetime of obesity to enjoy a fit, fun and fulfilling life.

"If you're obese, you fight it your entire life," says 50-year-old Vance. "It's always there, and it goes deep—the ridicule, the shame, the humiliation." Vance had tried getting healthy over the years. He'd join a gym, then lose interest. Lose 60 pounds on a diet, then gain 70 back. "It's been that way all my life," explains Vance, who spent summers at weight-loss camps for kids, and went to Overeaters Anonymous at age 12.



The Dingfelders now, inside Vance's former pants

The wake-up call

Fast forward to Vance as an adult. After enduring an obesity-related knee surgery, and seeing his entire family struggle with weight issues, he woke up one night at 2:00 am with swollen ankles—a sure sign of circulation issues. "I realized things were on the decline." At age 47, Vance thought, 'If you want to live, you have to do something. Otherwise you're going to die soon.' With two young sons, Vance says he was in no position to let things deteriorate. "I knew I had to make significant changes if I wanted to live."

Losing the guilt– and the weight.

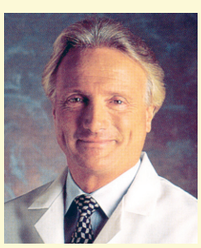
Vance and his wife, Stephanie, attended a 20/20 LifeStyles seminar. "There was an aha moment when Dr. Dedomenico said, 'You were never taught how to eat properly.' That really hit home for me." says Vance. He realized he didn't know how to stay fit or eat right, and he knew it was something his entire family needed to learn. So while Vance and Stephanie did 20/20 LifeStyles, their sons participated in 20/20 Kids. As a family they lost 350 pounds.

A new lifestyle. A renewed life.

Nationally-recognized 20/20 LifeStyles is proven to help people overcome metabolic imbalances. Regular meetings with a physician, registered dietitian, personal trainer and licensed counselor helped Vance overcome his lifelong battle with obesity. He also learned that taking better care of himself enabled him to take better care of others. "I know now that eating right, exercising properly and nurturing myself is my foundation, and it's where the strength for everything else begins."

Physician-founded. Physician-directed.

Cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Mark Dedomenico, created 20/20 LifeStyles to help those struggling with obesity-related metabolic disorders such as high cholesterol, diabetes, and hypertension. "After years of seeing people on the operating table, I wanted to catch them before they needed surgery." Today, 20/20 LifeStyles is the top long-term weight-loss program in the country. In addition, 79% of clients normalize their blood pressure. 61% normalize their cholesterol. 73% of those with Type II diabetes normalize their blood sugar, and all end their reliance on medication.



Dr. Mark Dedomenico

Cardiovascular Surgeon

Founder, 20/20 LifeStyles

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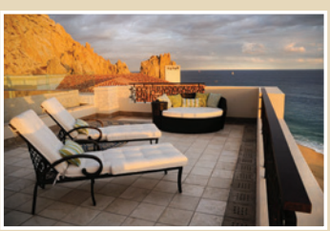
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Wine Tasting for a Good Cause

Wine connoisseurs and novices alike will gather at multiple events in Vancouver, B.C., to sample fine wines during the 34th-annual Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival, benefiting the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company. Offerings at the festival, February 27–March 4, range from casual tastings to educational seminars to gourmet dinners. On February 28, a "Taste Chile" canapé-and-wine pairing—a nod to this year's featured area, Chile—will please palates at The Waldorf Hotel. The same evening, The Fairmont Hotel Vancouver will host a Bacchanalia Gala Dinner + Auction, combining a five-course meal and wine pairings with auctions of rare, valuable wines and



DAVID NIDDRIE

At the International Festival Tasting, visitors can choose from 800 wines poured by 181 wineries.

wine-focused culinary experiences. At the popular International Festival Tasting, March 1–3 at the Vancouver Convention Centre West, attendees receive a glass at the door, with which they can sample some of nearly 800 wines poured by 181 wineries. A "Wines of Chile" tasting station will showcase Chilean wines, while a "Life Is a Cabernet" station will highlight Cabernets—another focus of the 2012 festival. For tickets and more information, call 604-873-3311 or visit www.playhousewinefest.com.

—Kaitlin Ryan

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Amazing steak. Amazing Tales.

Two unbelievable but not-necessarily-true stories from John Howie.



The Day Seattle won the Super Bowl.

The dip was gone. Seattle's Dungeness crab dip, set to go head to head against Pittsburgh's black bean dip for Super Bowl XL in only four hours, had mysteriously gone missing. This at 12:30 a.m. in Detroit with a blizzard blowing outside. But Chef Howie didn't panic, and although the highway signs were covered with snow, he managed to find a 24-hour grocery, bought some frozen blue crab, and recreated a version of the dip in his hotel bathroom. He finished just in time to get to the stadium as the Good Morning America cameras began to roll, and even more amazing, it won.



Cooking with perfect pitch.

It's well known that John Howie Steak custom ages each steak to perfection, some as few as 28 days, some as many as 42. But very few people know how to tell when a steak is at its peak. The secret is harmonics (known in the industry as "tuning" the steak). When you strike a tuning fork and hold it next to a cut of beef, it will reverberate at a different frequency depending on its tenderness, actually emitting a soft tone. The key, so to speak, is in how to tune the different cuts of beef. Chef Howie believes that top sirloin is at its peak when tuned to a D, filet mignon to G#.

One of the stories above is completely true. But if you believe nothing else, believe this – that John Howie Steak delivers the finest steak dining experience anywhere. From our 100% Wagyu beef, to our award-winning sommeliers, to our outstanding service, we're committed to making your dining experience, well, unbelievable.

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Desert Allure

The grand expanses of the American West delight with their vibrant diversity | by Eric Lucas



Western deserts—including California's Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, within the Sonoran Desert—are surprisingly complex ecosystems.

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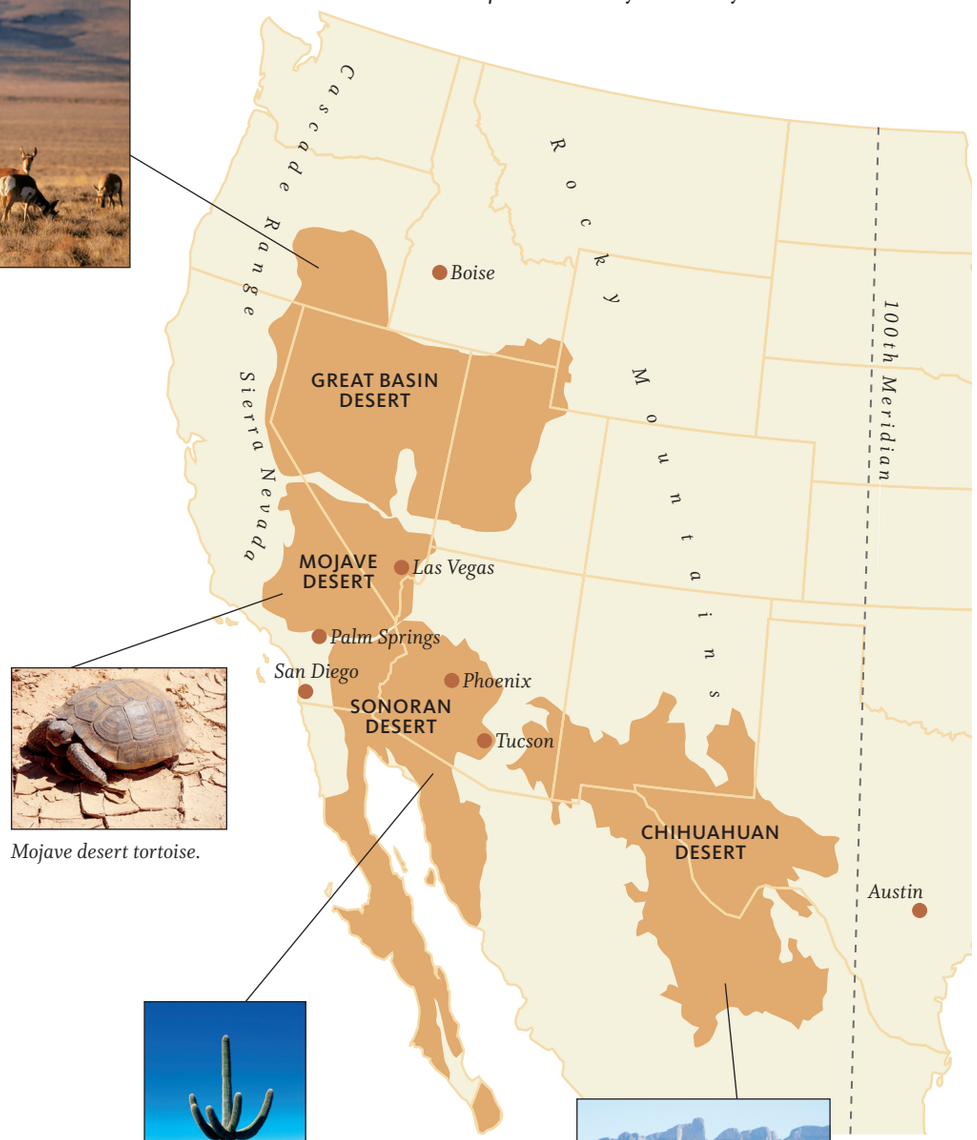
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Four Major U.S. Deserts

with representative flora and fauna



Pronghorn antelope.



Mojave desert tortoise.

Saguaro cactus.



Agave lechuguilla.

We'd seen pronghorn antelope cantering across seas of knee-high sage, eagles wheeling in the azure sky and northern harriers gliding above foothill meadows. We'd hiked to the edge of alkali flats and driven past ranches bigger than small cities. For dinner, we'd eaten ranch-raised flank steak cooked over a juniper-wood fire. Our guest from Finland, Henna, had experienced more in her one-day introduction to the "real West" than most visitors do in a week, but when my wife and I asked if there was anything else she truly longed to see, she nodded enthusiastically.

"It would be perfect if I could see a rattlesnake," she declared.

A rattlesnake?

"That's what people in Finland have in mind when you say 'the West'—a rattlesnake by the side of the trail in the desert," Henna told us. "Can we find one?"

A little while later, driving on a gravel track near Abert Rim—west of Hart Mountain, in the Great Basin high desert of Eastern Oregon—we actually did spy a 4-foot rattler, patterned like a braided leather belt, lounging at the side of the road. I pronounced the usual admonitions about keeping a wise distance, for the snake's benefit and ours, and we all piled out of the car. The reptile inspected us for a few minutes, then uncoiled and started to migrate across the road.

The early evening sun bathed the tops of nearby buttes in amber light. A mild breeze lifted the peppery smell of sunburnt sage. A prairie falcon keened in the distance. The rattler S-curved over the gravel and then disappeared downhill. The only other sound was a bit of sand skittering in a miniature dust devil.

The moment could not have been more quintessentially Western had it been an episode in a movie. And, of course, such settings have featured prominently in films.

"If your Finnish guest had turned around to see John Wayne standing there beside a cactus, the whole scene would have been perfect," says Jeffrey Richardson, Gamble curator of Western history,

(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) GREG VAUGHN; TIGERHAWKVOK; AMANDA CLEMENT / GETTY IMAGES; MELODY LYTLE / LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

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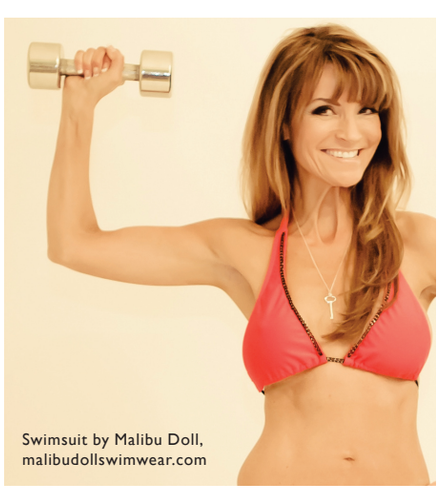


"Pose in a bikini at age 50? I thought no way. Then, I completed **MY BEST 10** *and...*
Here I am!"

Ramona Prineas, a past travel professional, couldn't wait to show off her miraculous change after finishing MY BEST 10, the world's premier medically-based health, fitness and beauty program at The PRO Sports Club and Spa.

"No doubt other women can relate... I had reached that age where I was no longer firm, and I wasn't very healthy. I picked up that bloat around the middle, the soft arms and a lack of energy. I also felt a loss of identity. I was sad about who I had become and didn't know it. It really hit me when I was going on vacation and tried on bathing suits in a Nordstrom changing room. I tried on one suit after another, looked in the mirror and became disgusted with myself. I knew I had to make a change. And that change was My Best 10. Now, I feel strong, eat well, and I've started a new chapter in my life.

"In just 10 weeks, I dropped weight, toned up and reclaimed my best 10.



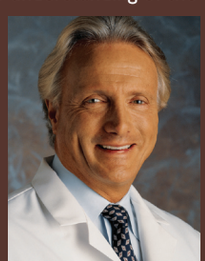
Swimsuit by Malibu Doll, malibudollswimwear.com

The My Best 10 team's emotional support was incredible. They cheered me on – really cared about me reaching my goals. You have your own personal trainer with a personalized exercise program, a registered dietitian who helps you with meal planning, and Dr. Daniel Levy, the Aging Gorgeously expert, who designs a personalized '10 years Younger Beauty Prescription' that will amaze you. Plus, they offer lifestyle coaching workshops that help you live a better, stronger, happier and stress free life. Even though I changed on the outside, medical tests proved a huge change had occurred inside my body.

"I've never felt better in my life than I do right now. And you can too. In just 10 weeks you can be 10 pounds lighter and look 10 years younger with My Best 10. Come on . . . take that first step and say yes!"

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Dr. Dedomenico's collective experience, expertise and research in a vast number of fields guides the expert care in the My Best 10 program components. Dr. Dedomenico's deep understanding of the connection between inner wellness and outer renewal is evident in each step it takes in the rejuvenation of the individual, both inside and out.



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popular culture and firearms at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles, when I tell him the anecdote involving our European visitor. Richardson, who studies the worldwide popularity of Western iconography, says the landscapes of the western United States are indelibly fixed in the human imagination.

Most people picture the West as a sere landscape, dust swirling, Clint Eastwood wrapping a scarf around his face to fend off the searing wind. "Lifeless," "barren," "bleak," "desolate" and "inhospitable" are among the descriptions applied to deserts.

"Like a scene from a John Ford film of John Wayne riding through Monument Valley, in a savage landscape," says Richardson.

About three-quarters of the western continental United States is semiarid or arid, climatically. But its deserts are actually rich with life, redolent with smells, bursting with growth and invention. Contrary to popular impression, deserts can be lush, soothing, vibrant, colorful, relaxing, populous (with animals and—in some places, such as Phoenix, Tucson and Las Vegas—people), productive, lovely and above all, from the traveler's perspective, fantastically worthwhile destinations.

Those of us who live or travel in the West enjoy the proximity of a huge array of deserts, big and small, famous and inconspicuous. Many of the most-sought 21st-century travel experiences—encounters with history and nature, for instance—are readily available in Western deserts.

"The key thing about deserts, to me, is that everything is on view," says David Yetman, a research social scientist at the University of Arizona's Southwest Center in Tucson. Yetman had a 10-year career as the star of a PBS show called *The Desert Speaks*, and he says the desert speaks in many languages, to those who listen, with "a startling abundance of life."

In a lifetime in the West, I've had dozens of such experiences:

■ Hiking a trail in the foothills of Tucson, Arizona, and spying a Gila monster beneath a mesquite tree. This rarely seen Sonoran Desert animal has a reputation much fiercer than reality—there's nothing monstrous about it. It is a placid, nonaggressive and colorful reptile whose venom hasn't killed anyone for decades and is, in fact, the source of a new drug used to treat diabetes. I didn't think of all that when I saw the lizard on my hike—I just marveled at the splendid, swirling bands of vermilion and ebony colors on its skin.

■ Admiring a hummingbird in its nest, poised on a branch in a *torote blanco*—a pitch-scented, paper-barked desert tree—on an island in the Sea of Cortés off Baja California, at the far southern end of the Sonoran Desert.

■ Watching a dust-colored bobcat nap in the sun beneath a palo verde tree, back in Tucson again, one January day in the Sonoran.

■ Clambering down a slope atop the Great Basin Desert's White Mountains in





A Joshua tree (left), one of the unique plants of the Mojave Desert, blooms in Joshua Tree National Park. The brightly colored Gila monster (above) is the largest land lizard in the United States, and inhabits desert terrain across the Southwest.

Major Deserts of the American West

Deserts are classified as either "horse latitude"—meaning they are within either of two latitudinal bands between 30 and 35 degrees where atmospheric circulation does not bring rain—or "rain shadow," in the lee of mountains that block rain-carrying weather systems. Horse-latitude deserts include the Sahara in the Northern Hemisphere and the Kalahari and Australian deserts in the Southern Hemisphere; rain shadows influence the dry climate of the Gobi. Most deserts feature a "signature plant," illustrating the water-saving techniques that have evolved in plant communities to withstand long periods of heat. The western continental United States has four major deserts:

Sonoran: This desert stretches from southeastern California across most of southern Arizona and down into Mexico. Its signature plants are the majestic saguaro in Arizona, and the organ pipe cactus and massive cardón cactus in Mexico. Rattlesnakes, coyotes, javelinas, ravens and innumerable lizards are common. Phoenix and Tucson are both in the Sonoran; Cabo San Lucas, La Paz and Loreto are the gateways to the southern part of this desert. The Tucson Mountain District of Saguaro National Park and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, both near Tucson, are two premier U.S. sites at which to experience the Sonoran Desert. The many islands in the Sea of Cortés east of Baja California are within a protected UNESCO biosphere reserve.

(TOP LEFT) GREG VAUGHN; (TOP RIGHT) TIM FLACH / GETTY IMAGES

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Mojave: The Mojave is in the lee of the Sierra Nevada and the southern coastal mountains, and comprises much of southeastern California, parts of southern Nevada and northwestern Arizona, and a small bit of southwestern Utah. Its signature plant at lower elevations is the creosote bush. The Joshua tree, which is an especially large yucca, is also one of the Mojave's unique plants. Coyotes, rattlesnakes and lizards are common. Las Vegas and Palm Springs are gateways to major Mojave parks: Joshua Tree and Death Valley national parks, the Mojave National Preserve and Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Great Basin: Encompassing much of Nevada and parts of California, Oregon, Idaho, Utah and Wyoming, this is a "cold desert," with a long but mostly dry winter. Numerous north-south mountain ranges run through this desert, catching snow and spilling it to foothill oases in spring and early summer. The signature plant is the big sagebrush; pronghorn antelope, "wild" (feral) horses, rattlesnakes and raptors are common. Reno, Las Vegas, Mammoth Lakes, Boise and Bend are gateways to the Great Basin Desert. Great Basin National Park in Nevada and Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in Oregon are significant Great Basin Desert preserves.

Chihuahuan: Stretching from southeast Arizona across to Texas, and south into Mexico, this is probably the least known of the four major deserts. Hot summers and cool winters mark the climate; agave lechuguilla is the signature plant, and coyotes, rattlesnakes, rabbits and raptors are common. Though it's far from most major cities, the Chihuahuan can be accessed via Tucson and Austin. Big Bend National Park in West Texas is the prime U.S. preserve in the Chihuahuan Desert. —*E.L.*



KARL WEATHERLY / GETTY IMAGES

Zabriskie Point is a popular destination in the Mojave's Death Valley National Park.

California to pause by a gnarled, sturdy 25-foot ancient bristlecone pine. It stood out against its neighbors as larger, more conspicuously located and clearly older. "How old?" I asked my companion, an ancient-tree expert.

"Oh, that one's probably just 3,000 years." Just!

■ Hiking up a small desert wash in southern New Mexico's Chihuahuan Desert, 100 miles east of Tucson, and



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Guadalupe García
Unit owner, Tower III

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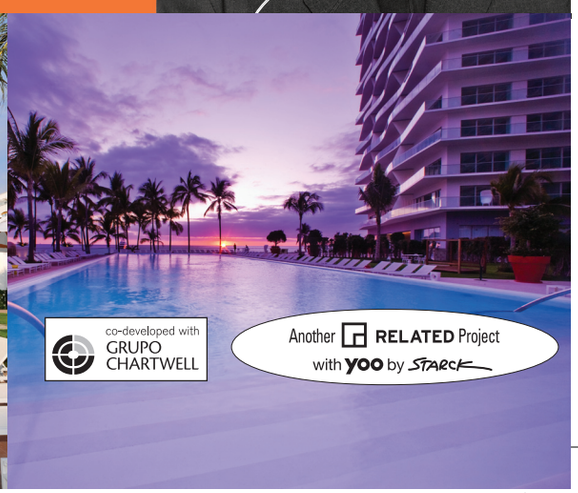
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looking behind a small boulder fallen from the cliff above to find a charcoal inscription left by a passing cowboy—in 1889.

- Plucking prickly pear fruit from a cactus in the Chihuahuan Desert in southeast Arizona. One must use gloves to pick these astounding delights, then rub them with a cloth to remove the clusters of hair-size thorns. You're left with a fruit whose juice gushes an intense purple and whose flavor is uniquely musty/sweet/tart. Archaeologists, studying plant remains in sediments, have determined that prickly pear fruits were a key element in the diet of the Southwest's Ancestral Puebloan people.
- Driving alongside pronghorn antelope across a flat in Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge—they in the sage, my truck on a dirt road. Pronghorns, apparently, like to race, and they are much more capable of speed here in the Great Basin scrub desert than my truck is. The antelope always hit the finish line first, partly because they can speed along at 30 mph, partly because they decide where the finish line is, pulling up at the edge of some dry wash or veering off toward a nearby ridge.

Adventures and discoveries such as these are available to all desert visitors—particularly if they abandon their preconceptions of deserts as desolate places.

"When I first moved out here from the East Coast, I expected to see no vegetation whatsoever," says Lynn Fenstermaker, an associate research professor with the Desert Research Institute, an academic research entity within the Nevada system of higher education. "I was misinformed. But still today, my family will come to visit from back East, and they'll call the Mojave a 'wasteland.' Actually, it's full of amazing biological adaptation and diversity."

Fenstermaker's favorite example is the humble creosote bush, which has a unique morphology that allows it to maintain leaves despite heat and periods of drought, and then respond to favorable conditions (when sufficient moisture is available) by shedding old leaves and growing new ones.

I like the example of the bristlecone pine, which occupies one of North America's harshest environments—in the alpine elevations of the Great Basin desert—and



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has developed strategies to survive multiple millennia. Among other things, the needles on bristlecone pines can live as long as 30 years.

Some people might be surprised to hear that mountainous areas can be considered desert. Much of the Mojave Desert, for instance, lies at 3,000 to 6,000 feet of elevation, the zone in which one finds Joshua trees. But in Death Valley National Park, the Mojave Desert's elevations range from 282 feet below sea level—at sun-baked Badwater Basin, the lowest point in the United States—to 11,049 feet at the summit of Telescope Peak.

"Great diversity, huge extremes and innumerable subtle gradations—that's the Mojave," says Fenstermaker. "It can reach 125 degrees on the floor of Death Valley, yet freeze six months later. It drops well below zero up on the mountains. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of spring-fed oases throughout the desert. It's the driest and the hottest in North America. There are few predictable rains. It's an amazing ecosystem, and much more complex than people think."

Misconceptions and myths abound in and around deserts. For example, can you really lop off the top half of a saguaro or barrel cactus and unleash a shower of life-giving water? No, the plants' fluids are stored in tiny cellular chambers.

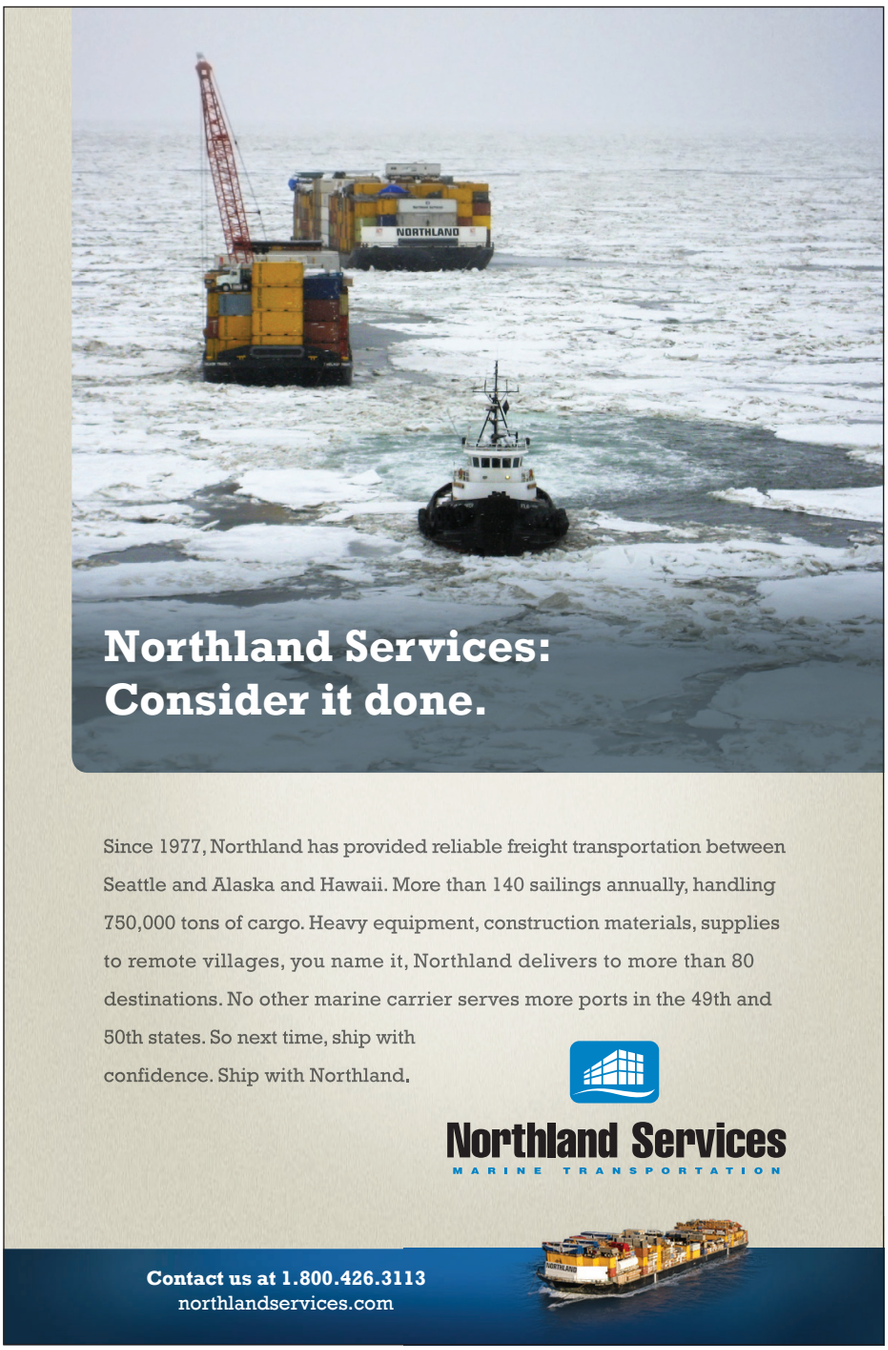
Do all deserts consist of sand dunes? Hardly. And one of the biggest dune complexes on the continent—the approximately 740-square-mile Athabasca Sand Dunes—is in northern Saskatchewan, far from arid country.

Is it always dry in deserts? No, the Arizona Upland subdivision of the Sonoran has two rainy seasons: early July to mid-September and December to January. During the autumn, Pacific storms may also fling rain clouds northeast into the Sonoran Desert, especially in Baja California.

So what constitutes a desert? How big are deserts? How many are there? Even geographers, ecologists and naturalists debate this question. There are varying



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definitions of "desert," but according to the U.S. Geological Survey, most classification systems rely on some combination of the number of days of rainfall, the total amount of annual rainfall, temperature, humidity or other factors. Deserts may be hot; they may be cold. But deserts are always dry.

"My definition," says David Yetman, "is that a desert is where the climatic lack of water is a primary determinant of the plant community." In other words, deserts are arid places where the plants show clear physiological adaptations to drought. Though, as Lynn Fenstermaker observes, anywhere there's a spring in the Mojave, you can have a lush oasis with complete ground coverage by green plants.

More North American Deserts

Aside from the four main deserts of the West, many other smaller areas of desertified or shrub-steppe terrain are found from the far north to the Hawaiian Islands. Below are a number of interesting examples.

San Luis Valley: South-central Colorado's big high-elevation "park" encircled by mountains is largely a shrub-stepped arid land. It is best known for Great Sand Dunes National Park, which features the tallest sand dunes in North America. Denver is the nearest major city.

Carcross Desert: This small area of sand dunes is in the Yukon, just north of Skagway, Alaska. In the lee of the towering Coast Mountains, it's a cold, arid pocket labeled by area residents as the "smallest desert in the world"—about one square mile.

Lee slopes of the Hawaiian Islands: All the mountains of Hawai'i have both wet and dry sides, with the rain-bearing trade winds blocked by the heights. The Kona coast of Hawai'i Island, parts of West Maui and Kaua'i's Waimea Canyon area typify this phenomenon.

Okanagan (or Nk'Mip) Desert: The south end of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, in the area of Osoyoos, is an arid pocket with sage-brush, rattlesnakes, jackrabbits and other common desert denizens. It's a distant corner of the Columbia Basin arid range also found in Eastern Washington, and is regarded by some geographers as part of the Great Basin Desert. Kelowna is the nearest major city. —*E.L.*

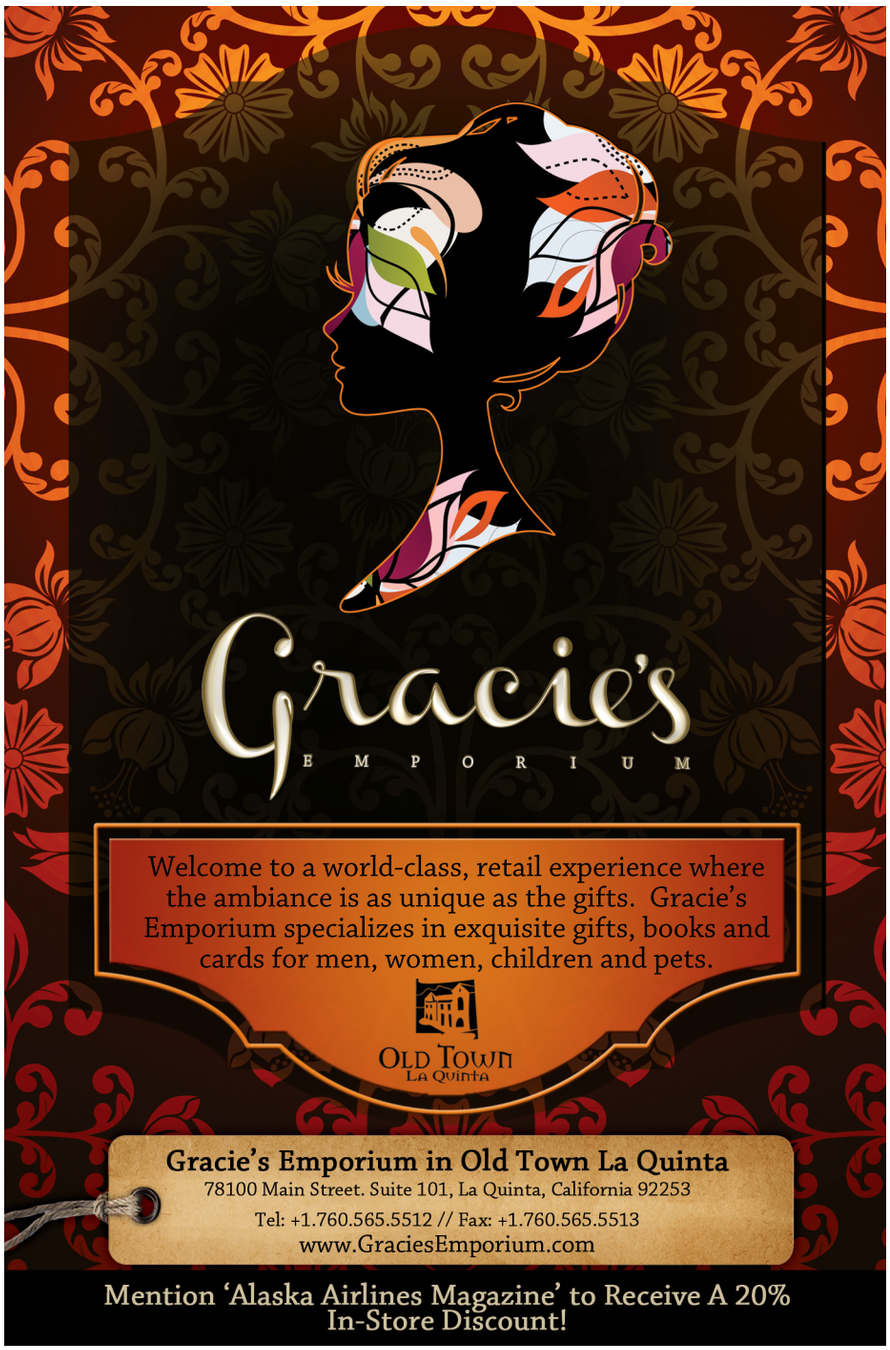
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Most geographers recognize four main deserts in North America—the Sonoran, the Mojave, the Chihuahuan and the Great Basin (see sidebar starting on p. 39). The best-known of these, the Sonoran, encompasses approximately 100,000 square miles, straddling a bit of California, most of southern Arizona and much of Mexico's states of Sonora and Baja California Norte and Sur. It has 2,000 plant species and 560 vertebrate species, according to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum's seminal book, *A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert*. The Sonoran's size and biodiversity are typical of North American deserts, though the Sonoran is tiny compared to the Sahara (3.5 million square miles) or the Arabian (about 1 million) deserts.

Conceptually, however, the term "desert" is applied more widely than geographers or ecologists award it. "The West" has sometimes been considered to begin at the 100th meridian—which runs roughly from Bismarck, North Dakota, through Laredo, Texas—as this longitude marks a significant climatic division: Eastward, more than 30 inches of precipitation a year fall, enough for nonirrigated farming. Everything between the 100th meridian and the foothills of the Rocky Mountains was once tabbed the "Great American Desert," because rainfall in this large swath was insufficient for growing crops.

These High Plains between the 100th meridian and the Rockies were the home of cattle drives, Dodge City, buffalo herds, Sioux tribes and other iconic Western images known around the world. Though no longer classed as desert by modern geographers, most of the region is semiarid, lightly forested, and given to dry weather mitigated by summer downpours and winter blizzards. Here bison roamed by the millions, thriving on hardy buffalo grass.

From the Rockies west to the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada, the terrain is dominated by plains and desert. Generally speaking, less than 15 inches of precipitation a year falls in this zone. Four of North America's best-known deserts—the Mojave, Sonoran, Great Basin and Chihuahuan—are found here, plus innumerable smaller ones. Several states *CONTINUED ON PAGE 142*





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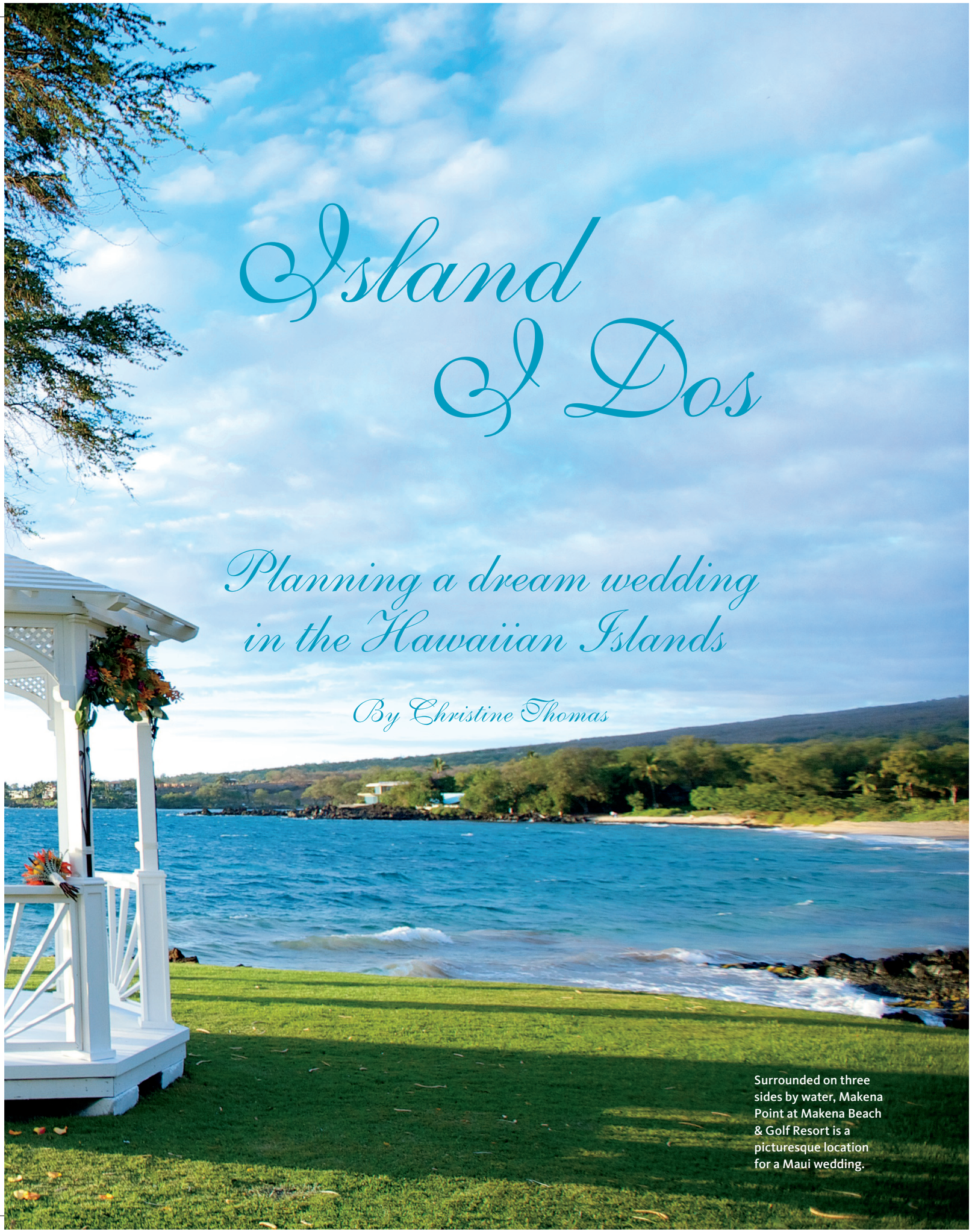


ANNA KIM PHOTOGRAPHY

Island I Dos

Planning a dream wedding in the Hawaiian Islands

By Christine Thomas



Surrounded on three sides by water, Makena Point at Makena Beach & Golf Resort is a picturesque location for a Maui wedding.



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It's my wedding day. As I walk toward the hydrangea-bedecked altar, the gentle mist that has been falling subsides, leaving the apple-green lawn at my soon-to-be in-laws' Hawai'i Island home—built 100 years ago by my fiancé's great-grandparents—dusted with dew and the grounds permeated with an earthy, sweet aroma that mingles with the heady perfume of the pīkake



PENNY DINN

Sidney and Keith from Seattle exchanged vows last summer at Kaua'i's St. Regis Princeville.

flowers in the lei draped around my neck. I feel lucky, since people in Hawai'i consider island rain to be a blessing on a marrying couple.

The familiar strum of 'ukulele accompanies my father and me down the petal-strewn aisle. I'm nervous, but once I see my intended waiting next to the *kahu* (officiate), our closest friends and family looking on, I feel perfectly at home, even though my home on O'ahu is actually many miles of ocean away. When my now-husband and I decided to wed on Hawai'i Island, at first we didn't consider the fact that, like 62 percent of the nearly 24,000 couples who got married in Hawai'i in 2010, we were choosing a destination wedding—a ceremony in a place we didn't live. Deciding to exchange vows on Hawai'i Island seemed natural, as the isle has always been meaningful to us, and we love planning weekend getaways there to see family and explore. In addition—like most couples who choose a destination wedding—we wanted an intimate, personal ceremony, shared with people who really wanted to be there, and to spend more than one day with close friends and family, together in one place.

Though I had an opportunity to visit the ceremony-and-reception site before the big event, which some destination couples are unable to do, I was still tasked with planning the details from afar—including sourcing delicious food, vibrant flowers, expert photography and lilting music—in a place I did not live. To accomplish this, I asked for recommendations from people I know on O'ahu who specialize in the catering, floral, photography and music industries, and spoke with everyone I could who had planned or attended events on Hawai'i Island—from my husband's family to friends of friends. After many weeks of email and phone conversations, Internet research and help from a local wedding coordinator generously hired by my mother-in-law, the ceremony turned out beautifully. Any logistical challenges were more than worth it.

The Hawaiian Islands are perfect wedding destinations for numerous reasons—including the islands' proximity to the West Coast, idyllic climate and aloha spirit, as well as the easy access they give couples to a variety of wonderful honeymoon spots.

"People get married in Hawai'i for the weather, the people, the atmosphere and all of those things they see in the movies," says Tanna Dang, co-owner of Honolulu

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bride-resource center The Wedding Café and author of *Wedding Belles* (Watermark Publishing, 2009), a book of tips and ideas from and for island brides.

For many couples, the Hawaiian Islands also hold a special place in their hearts. "About 80 percent of our couples are from the West Coast, especially California," says Lauren Otomo Manuel, one of two

> "The nice thing about resort weddings is that you have everything you need at your fingertips, and everything looks so grand and beautiful and elegant," says Dang.

wedding coordinators at The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows on Hawai'i Island's Kohala Coast. "But we've noticed that at least one person in the couple usually has a personal connection to Hawai'i."

This was true for two couples recently married in the islands—Evan and Lauren



BIANCA PHOTOGRAPHY

Turtle Bay Resort on O'ahu's North Shore offers many scenic places to get married.

from outside Los Angeles, who wed at The Mauna Lani Bay, and Sydney and Keith from Seattle, who wed at Kaua'i's St. Regis Princeville. Evan once lived on Maui, and Sydney and Keith regularly vacation in Hawai'i.

With so many wonderful wedding venues to choose from—including luxuri-

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ous resorts, secluded condominiums, private estates and historical churches—often the toughest part of planning a wedding in Hawai'i is choosing the locale. Once you do, working with a wedding planner, as I did, can help make executing a wedding vision from a distance blissfully uncomplicated.

EASE OF PLANNING

Choosing a wedding at one of Hawai'i's many spectacular resorts—which offer distinctive ambiences, ranging from bustling and luxurious to low-key and tranquil—is one of the easiest options for destination couples. "The nice thing about resort weddings is that you have everything you need at your fingertips, and everything looks so grand and beautiful and elegant," says Dang.

In addition, couples (and their guests, if they choose) who plan a resort wedding have the convenience of staying on-property, close to the ceremony site. Some resorts require this proximity, providing wedding services only to guests. Another benefit of getting married at a resort is that most offer on-site coordinators who not only plan the ceremony and reception, but also arrange lū'au, sunset sails and other events for family and friends.

COURTESY: DISNEY



Mickey Mouse tops a cake at O'ahu's Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa.

"If couples want to do a day-after brunch, it's an option," says Tori Rogers, founder of Hawaiian Island Wedding Planners. "The hotels will also do tastings, and there's the indoor/outdoor option in cases of uncooperative weather. Also, air conditioning is huge."

She adds that couples choosing to get married at a resort must cede some control and abide by the property's rules. For example, some resorts require the use of



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approved vendors to avoid an extra charge.

The turnkey nature of a resort wedding appealed immensely to Sydney and Keith from Seattle. After getting engaged on February 13, 2011, they immediately began planning a wedding on Kauaʻi for last summer, when Sydney, a third-grade teacher, was on vacation and when Keith's family was planning their annual vacation to Poʻipū, on Kauaʻi's sunny south shore.

"We looked at private estates online, sites on the beach and resorts in Poʻipū," says Sydney. They decided on the St. Regis Princeville, which hosts only one wedding

> "There's a trust we have to build with our brides and grooms, because we're planning the most important day of their lives," Otomo Manuel says.

a day. The assurance that they'd be the only couple wedding at the property that day, an abundance of activities at the resort and in the area, and the property's unique panorama—encompassing Hanalei Bay and part of the Nāpali Coast's dramatic green cliffs—inspired them to contact St. Regis wedding manager Wendy Fisher.

"It was an instant connection with Wendy—like talking to a friend," says Sydney. Fisher's professional communication via email and conference calls left the couple confident that their vision of a low-key, relaxed wedding was in good hands.

From placing handmade, personal signs around the property to arranging for a fire-knife dancer and a s'mores station at the reception, Fisher accommodated Sydney and Keith's requests and executed all the details.

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COURTESY: MICHELLE DAVIES / I DO BELIEVE PHOTOGRAPHY

This couple's ceremony at Secret Island, a white-sand beach at O'ahu's Kualoa Ranch, was coordinated by Tori Rogers of Hawaiian Island Wedding Planners.

"I coordinate [weddings] entirely," says Fisher. "I am usually the first person couples see on their wedding day, and one of the last people they see prior to going back to their suite at the end of the evening."

For Evan and Lauren, the ability to easily communicate their vision and personally tailor their Mauna Lani Bay wedding also made all the difference. "The people we talked to were so accommodating that we felt really comfortable," says Evan.

Once Evan and Lauren submitted their wedding request through The Mauna Lani Bay website, Otomo Manuel contacted the couple via email—and they immediately hit it off.

"Especially with a destination wedding, it was important to find someone we got along with," says Evan. "We had that chemistry [with Otomo Manuel], because she understood what we wanted and liked."

"There's a trust we have to build with our brides and grooms, because we're planning the most important day of their lives," Otomo Manuel says. "[Evan, Lauren and I] just clicked."

Evan and Lauren emailed ideas back and forth with Otomo Manuel, who sent them numerous photographs and videos of property events. Once the three worked together to customize a wedding package and finalize dates and vendors, Evan and Lauren were free to request personal touches until a month before the wedding. These included adding to the menu an ice cream sundae bar serving local Tropical Dreams



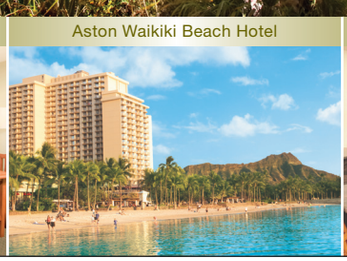
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Heavenly Honeymoons

It's nearly effortless to flow from wedding to honeymoon in the Hawaiian Islands. Choose a second island or completely different side of an island for a new feel and an itinerary that complements personal style. Highlights might include the following:

Heritage Sites

Hawai'i's rich culture is evident throughout the islands, especially at royal palaces, sacred Hawaiian *heiau*, and cultural museums and sites. Take a walk through historic Honolulu and stop to tour royal residences, such as 'Iolani Palace and Queen Emma Summer Palace. On Maui, take a candlelit tour of the 1834 Baldwin House in Lahaina or a guided excursion to the upcountry Maui Gold Pineapple Company. Kaua'i attractions include the southeast shore's Alekoko "Menehune" Fishpond—said to be built by Hawai'i's legendary little people—and historic Waimea Town on the west side, near the spot where Captain James Cook first landed in Hawai'i in the late 1700s. On Hawai'i Island, Anna Ranch above the Kohala Coast offers tours highlighting local ranching history.

Great Cuisine

The Hawaiian Islands offer a host of gastronomical adventures. O'ahu is home to eminent chefs and world-class restaurants, such as Nobu, Morimoto, Chef Mavro, Alan Wong's and Roy's. On Maui, look for Mama's Fish House on the north shore and, when visiting upcountry, Bev Gannon's Hali'imaile General Store, as well as epicurean tours at Tedeschi Winery, Ali'i Kula Lavender and O'o Farm. Kaua'i's Kilohana Plantation, southwest of Līhu'e, offers a tour during which guests ride a 1939 Whitcomb diesel engine and hike in a rain forest, before enjoying a gourmet picnic lunch in an orchard. Hawai'i Island is all about niche agriculture. Tour and sample at the Hawaiian Vanilla Company in Pa'auilo and Original Hawaiian Chocolate Factory in Kailua-Kona, as well as at several eminent coffee plantations, including Greenwell Farms, Mountain Thunder Coffee Plantation and Uchida Farm in Kona, and Aikane Plantation in Ka'ū.

Natural Treasures

Hawai'i's national and state parks, and other protected sites give visitors access to amazing natural and historical wonders. O'ahu is home to the touching World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument at Pearl Harbor, as well as the iconic Diamond Head State Monument. On Maui, Haleakalā volcano, within Haleakalā National Park, ascends more than 10,000 feet, and 'Īao Valley State Monument is known for its 1,200-foot-high 'Īao Needle rock formation. Kaua'i's 10-mile-long, 3,600-foot-deep Waimea Canyon draws comparisons to the Grand Canyon, and the island's magnificent cliffs on the northern Nāpali Coast also inspire awe. On Hawai'i Island, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park attracts visitors interested in Kīlauea, one of Earth's most active volcanoes, while at 'Akaka Falls State Park, hikers can take a short walk to the namesake falls, which plunge 442 feet into a stream. —*C.T.*



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BOB BROWN, COURTESY: THE MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL & BUNGALOWS



CALVIN HAZEN, COURTESY: GRAND WAILEA

ice cream, and enhancing the decor with lovely apothecary-jar decorations Otomo Manuel found especially for the couple.

"We don't mind doing extra things for our brides," says Otomo Manuel. "We make sure that, come the day of their wedding, they get what they want."

This philosophy, along with their wedding's oceanfront location on the Milo Tree Lawn, and the resort's personal atmosphere, are what Evan and Lauren still rave about.

"It almost seemed as though it was just our family and friends at the resort," says Evan. Agrees Lauren, "It was really intimate."

AN ISLAND FOR EVERYONE

Once a couple has decided on a destination wedding in Hawai'i, the next step is selecting an island suitable to the mood the bride and groom want for their event and the activities they want to offer their guests.

Left: Brides and grooms choose Hawai'i's The Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows for its oceanfront setting and personalized service. Right: The Grand Wailea's Seaside Chapel is a romantic venue on Maui.



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COURTESY: HALEKULANI

Newlyweds can relax with an alfresco couples' massage at O'ahu's Halekulani Hotel.

Just like each couple, each Hawaiian Island has a distinct personality. The following guide to O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island can help couples find the best location for their wedding.

O'ahu is alive and energetic, home to Honolulu—a contemporary city with shopping, nightlife and historic sights—as well as beach-lined countryside with rolling surf and verdant hikes. "It's also got the largest array of vendors, such as hair and makeup artists, floral designers, photographers and rental companies that provide beautiful decor," says Mona Hirata, president and co-founder of O'ahu-based Weddings by Grace and Mona. For a secluded, outer-island feel, many couples choose the North Shore's Turtle Bay Resort, with multiple locations for weddings, from oceanfront sand to an elegant chapel. On O'ahu's expansive west side, the JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa in Ko 'Olina charms with three distinct wedding sites, and personalized spa and salon treatments. Newcomer Aulani,

Licensing Requirements

Couples planning a wedding in the Hawaiian Islands should be prepared to apply together, in person, for a marriage license once they arrive. The hours of marriage-license offices and agents vary; many are open only Monday through Friday; others are closed on Fridays and some require an appointment. The fee is $65. Once the license is issued, there is no waiting period before the ceremony can take place. Visit http://hawaii.gov/health/vital-records/vital-records/marriage/index.html for more information.

Since January 1, the Hawaiian Islands have offered civil-union licenses to all couples. To learn more, visit http://hawaii.gov/health/vital-records/vital-records/civilunion/index.html.



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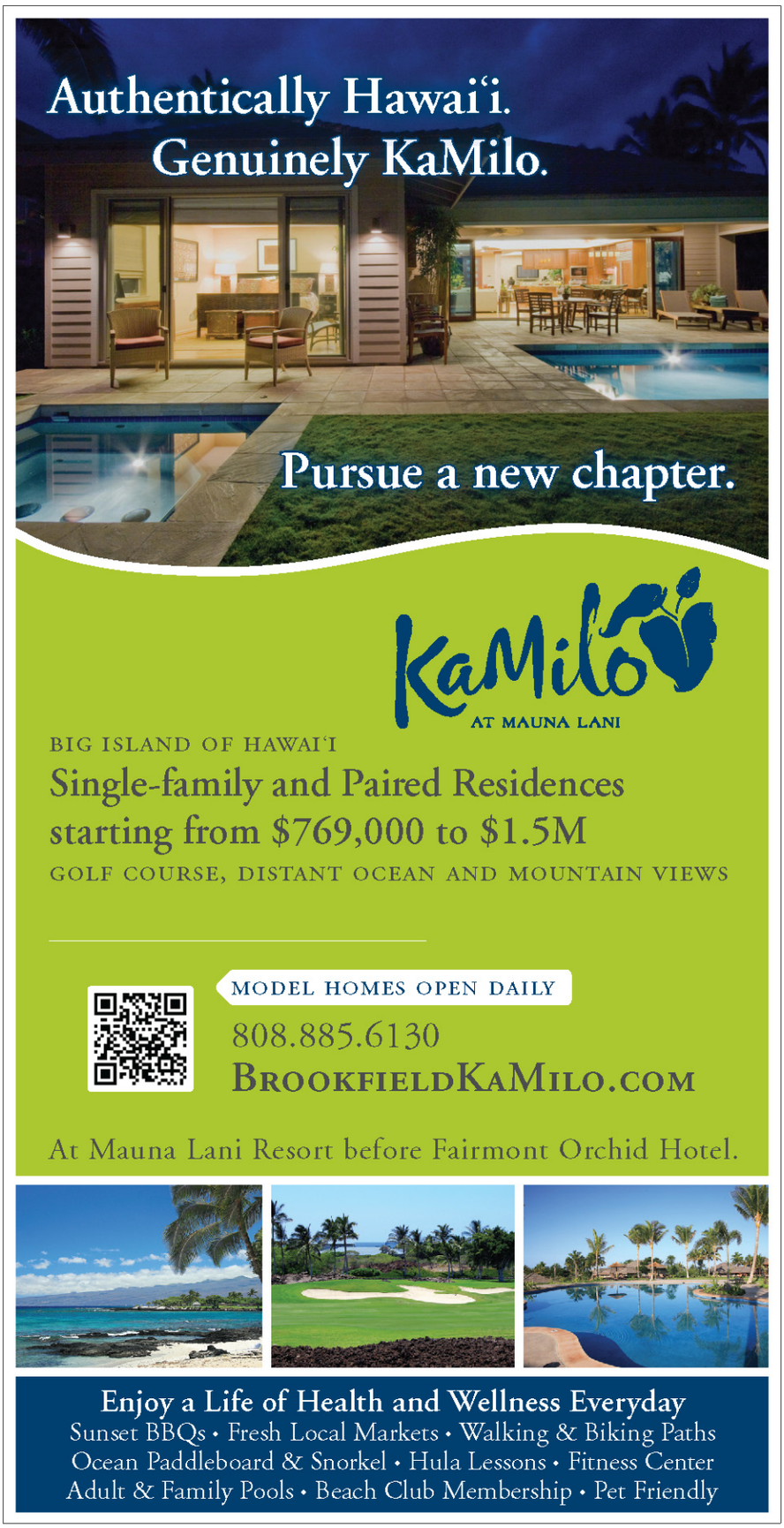
a Disney Resort & Spa, also located in Ko ʻOlina, designs fairy-tale wedding packages for guests using its ocean-view Makaloa Garden ceremony location. Closer to Honolulu, the southeast shore's Kahala Hotel & Resort attracts couples thanks to two sought-after oceanfront gazebo sites.

Oʻahu's legendary Waikīkī Beach is one of the most popular places for Hawaiian Island weddings. In the heart of Waikīkī, the Halekulani Hotel is noted for top-notch service and dining. "It also has fabulous complimentary amenities [for couples meeting minimum revenue requirements]," says Hirata. Two grand historical properties in Waikīkī are the pink Royal Hawaiian Hotel, with views of Diamond Head and Waikīkī Beach, and the white-columned Moana Surfrider Hotel, a Westin Resort & Spa. "Photographers love [the Moana Surfrider] for its many picturesque spots, and couples love its gorgeous ocean views," says Hirata.

Whichever island best suits the newly betrothed—be it Oʻahu, Maui, Kauaʻi or Hawaiʻi—they can be sure that exceptional experiences await.

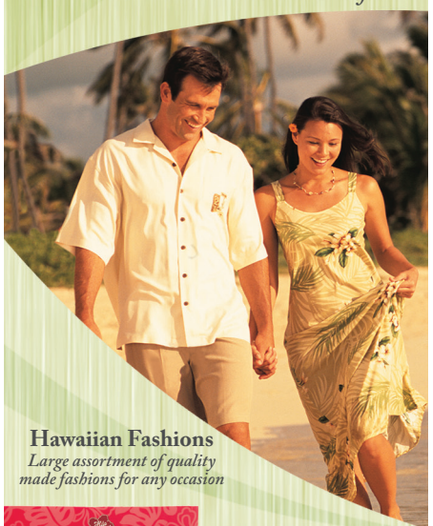
Other acclaimed Waikīkī wedding venues include the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort and Spa, where packages can include free honeymoon accommodations at Hyatt Hotels & Resorts worldwide; the Sheraton Waikiki, whose Niʻihau Terrace is ideal for intimate weddings and whose recently renovated Hawaiʻi Ballroom can accommodate larger parties; and the Aston Waikiki Beach Hotel, offering fun, Hawaiian-themed decor.

Maui is popular among visitors seeking great beaches and abundant options. "I recommend Maui for people who want that 'in between,' because Maui has every-



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thing," says Rogers of Hawaiian Island Wedding Planners. In the westside resort area of Kapalua, the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua offers a wedding manager who plans the big details, while a personal wedding concierge organizes and tracks the small ones—from seating arrangements to optional hula instruction for the bride. Also in west Maui, the Sheraton Maui accommodates weddings of two to 350 guests and has a private presidential suite with views of Moloka'i and Lāna'i, and Honua Kai Resort & Spa provides couples with a list of preferred wedding planners who can help make their dreams come true at the resort. In Wailea, in south Maui, the all-suite/villa, oceanfront Fairmont Kea Lani creates ceremonies, receptions and weeklong itineraries based on a couple's personal style and interests, and the Makena Beach & Golf Resort—located on 1,800 acres—is the only resort on secluded Maluaka Beach, which boasts views of five islands. Another south Maui gem is the Grand Wailea, home to the romantic Seaside Chapel, a New England–style chapel with magnificent stained-glass windows by local artist Yvonne Cheng. Seeking a quiet escape, some couples choose Travassa Hāna, a secluded romantic oasis on the eastern coast, at the end of the scenic, winding Hāna Highway.

COURTESY: THE FAIRMONT



Island florists create beautiful bouquets with orchids and other local blossoms.

Kaua'i's natural beauty and lush landscapes are perfect for outdoor adventurers. "Couples are intrigued by Kaua'i," says Fisher, commenting on the oldest and greenest Hawaiian Island. In Po'ipū, the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa offers four ceremony venues, including garden and ocean-view settings, and the 20-acre Sheraton Kaua'i provides four sites for everything from intimate gatherings to 200-guest affairs. In Princeville, on the north shore, the

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Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas specializes in intimate weddings, held in a gazebo with a view of the sea. And in remote Hāʻena, about 10 miles to the west, the Hanalei Colony Resort's "unplugged" condominium accommodations are set on five beachfront acres.

Hawai'i Island is well suited to couples seeking first-class resorts set against a diverse, open landscape. "People are looking for what they imagined Hawai'i to be like [long ago]," says Otomo Manuel of The Mauna Lani Bay. Many top-tier resorts dot the northwestern Kohala Coast, including the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, featuring a distinguished Asian art collection, and its sister property on the bluff, the Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel. Also on the Kohala Coast, The Fairmont Orchid offers outdoor wedding venues, with views of the Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa volcanoes. In addition to farm-to-table cuisine, the Four Seasons Resort Hualālai, on the Kona-Kohala Coast, provides its one wedding couple a day with a dedicated planner, from start to finish. And minutes from Kailua-Kona town, the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa is home to the Kona Coast's sole wedding chapel, and also offers a picturesque reception site on the adjacent lawn, complete with a gazebo.

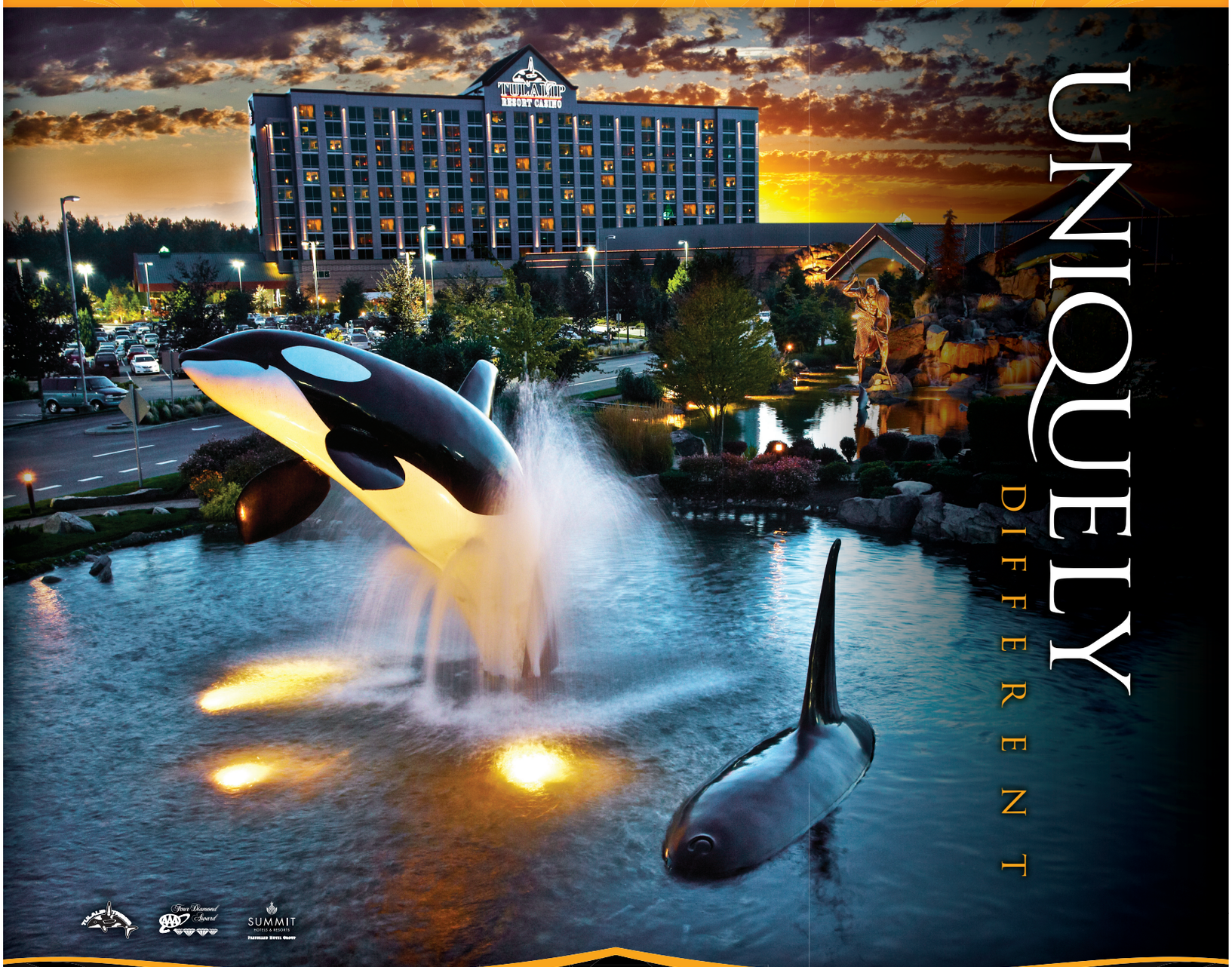
Whichever island best suits the newly betrothed—be it O'ahu, the Gathering Place; Maui, the Magic Isle; Kaua'i, the Garden Isle; or Hawai'i, the Big Island—they can be sure that exceptional wedding and honeymoon experiences await. ▲

Christine Thomas is happily married on O'ahu, where she writes about travel, culture, literature and interesting people.

GETTING THERE

Alaska Airlines offers daily service to O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i and the Island of Hawai'i. To book an Alaska Airlines Vacations package to Hawai'i, go to alaskaair.com or call 800-468-2248.

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AN EASIER WAY TO MEET SOMEONE

An Insider Look at Dating in the Modern World

Why does dating often times seem so difficult and daunting? With all the dating websites and social networks out there, you'd think it would be easier than ever for singles to meet someone special. But that's not the case. Meeting the right people seems harder than ever. To get the latest on real-time dating trends, we caught up with Melissa Brown, one of the many dating experts at *It's Just Lunch.*

Q: So what does today's dating scene look like?

A: Dating today is an interesting paradox: we're more connected than ever through social media and online networking, yet we're also more disconnected than ever. Today's technology makes communication faster, but I'm not sure it's better. You can't make a genuine connection with someone by texting, emailing or friending. When you meet someone in person and share a meal together, you see how that person interacts with you and the people around you. You observe their body language and how they carry themselves. That's where the true chemistry happens: face-to-face, one on one. At It's Just Lunch, our focus is to get people out from behind their computers and out making connections with real people.

Q: What's the biggest frustration singles have with modern dating?

A: I hear the same thing over and over: "it was like a second job spending all that time looking over online profiles trying to find someone who could be a match". It just takes all the fun out of dating. Most singles don't have a problem finding dates, but they can't find "good" dates. After a round of bad matches and a busy schedule, it's easy for one to feel like giving up on dating all together.

Q: So why do people come to you at It's Just Lunch?

A: People hire specialists such as financial advisors and personal trainers to handle so many aspects of their lives, so why not use a professional to help you find someone special. We specialize in dating—we've made more than two million matches over the past 20 years!

Q: What differentiates It's Just Lunch from other dating sites out there?

A: We believe that the best way to get to know someone is face-to-face. So, we meet every IJL client in person to get a feel for his or her personality, preferences and relationship goals. Then we hand-select and arrange fun casual dates so our clients can meet someone face-to-face and see if there is chemistry.

Q: Does it work?

A: Answer: 20 years, 150 cities and over two million first dates. Get in touch with It's Just Lunch at **800.858.6526 or ItsJustLunch.com.**

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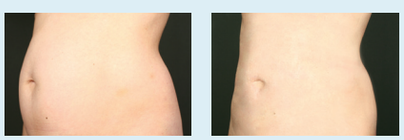


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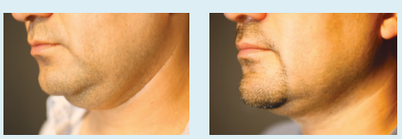
SmartLipo™ MPX effectively tightens and tones problem areas, leaving them smoother and more youthful looking.



Before After



Before After



Before After

Who will provide the best care possible?

As with any surgical procedure, finding the right partner is the most important decision of all. That's why so many patients seek out Board Certified Cosmetic Dermatologist, Dr. Daniel Levy.

Dr. Levy and his staff have a reputation for their highly personalized approach to patient care. As Dr. Levy explains, "Even though we've performed the SmartLipo™ MPX procedure many times, we understand that each of our patients is experiencing something like this for the first time. We work to make each patient's experience a positive one – answering all their questions, providing the absolute best techniques available, and being as focused on their overall health needs as we are on their aesthetic goals."

From the in-depth, one-on-one consultations he conducts prior to the procedure, to the series of scheduled follow-ups afterwards, Dr. Levy's highly personalized approach and ongoing involvement distinguish him as the best choice for those seeking a higher standard of care.

As patient Cara S. explains, "I wasn't just looking for a quick fix. I wanted to know a doctor was going to be there for me before, during and after the procedure. I definitely feel like Dr. Levy understands the unique aesthetic goals for both men and women, and with his many years of experience I knew I was getting the best care there is."

What results can you expect?

SmartLipo™ MPX effectively liquefies fat and simultaneously tightens the surrounding skin through collagen remodeling, leaving treated areas smoother, more toned, and more youthful looking. After 2-3 days, you'll be back to your normal activities, feeling and looking better than ever. As Cara explains, "I'm so pleased I had the procedure done. I'm down a dress size – and I feel great when I step out of the shower!"

Find out whether SmartLipo™ MPX is right for you. Schedule a complimentary consultation with Dr. Levy at 425.861.6281



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An Extraordinary Catch

Southcentral Alaska's salmon runs begin in late May and continue through October, providing anglers with a wide range of sport and adventure By Ken Marsh



Alaska offers multiple options for salmon fishing, from the accessible waters of Southcentral to the prolific streams of Kodiak Island, Alaska's Southeast panhandle and Katmai National Park & Preserve, shown here.

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PATRICK J. ENDRES / ALASKAPHOTOGRAPHICS.COM

The monster king salmon struck late that June evening, shortly after the sun had set into the spruce tops on the river's far side. One moment I was gazing past my fishing rod, hypnotized by swirling eddies, the next I was startled, struggling against a force that nearly wrenched the rod from my hands. ■ Mark Kufel, my fishing pal of more than 30 years, had caught his salmon hours earlier and now was hard at the drift boat's oars. He'd refused to let the river sweep us downstream to the landing, to leave before I'd hooked up. Instead he rowed against the current, working hard to keep me fishing "the zone"—a murky, seemingly bottomless run where we knew salmon to hold. ■ Earlier that evening, after we'd fallen silent—I out of frustration, he out of respect—Mark had suggested I slip my salmon rod into a steel holder on the gunnel and let my plug work, perhaps allow a fish to hook itself. Overeager anglers often set the hook too quickly and miss the fish entirely when the strike finally comes. But I'd preferred to hold on, to take my chances and remain physically connected should a strike come suddenly, like an electrical jolt. ■ And that's exactly how it happened. ■ Now taut as a guitar string, my line cut fast through the water as the fish tore downriver. I yanked up my rod tip to brake the run, only to have it yanked back down. I knew then that I'd hooked an extraordinary fish, something far beyond the Susitna River drainage's usual 25- to 30-pounder.

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MICHAEL DEYOUNG (2)

Not that the tributaries of Southcentral Alaska's Susitna River don't produce the occasional behemoth. Fish to 70 pounds are sometimes caught in area streams. And it was on this same river just a few summers earlier that I'd watched as a huge king salmon, striking a back-trolled plug, snatched the rod from the hands of Mark's father. It was a classic hit-and-run, as with the big fish I engaged now, except that salmon had vanished instantly, in a splashing roll, taking an expensive rod and reel with it.

For a great many Alaskans, the snow-free months begin and end on the water in the sun, wind and rain, where wild Pacific salmon are tackled in iceberg-cooled fjords, or pulled leaping and writhing from rivers and creeks. We're blessed here with five salmon species—sockeye, coho, pink, chum and, of course, the big kings—fish that arrive each summer in silver waves, roiling estuaries near and far as they embark upon their spawning journeys up natal streams. Beginning in late May and extending in some waters into November, the individual species arrive one after the other, conveniently providing salmon-fishing opportunities for spring, summer and fall anglers.



Top: Fly-fishing for pink salmon on Monashka Creek, near the town of Kodiak on Kodiak Island. Left: Drift-boat fishing on the Upper Kenai River, near Cooper Landing.

Here in Southcentral Alaska, where highway access to a variety of waters makes fishing opportunities plentiful, inexpensive and generally easy, salmon season unofficially begins on Memorial Day weekend as the first chinook—locally called king salmon—begin entering rivers such as the Kenai, Anchor and Susitna, among many tributaries and other regional streams. King salmon runs build in June, peaking in waters such as the Kenai River and upper Susitna drainages in early to mid-July.

Kings also provide sport off Southcentral Alaska's coasts. In fact, for some saltwater anglers in Resurrection Bay out of Seward, and in lower Cook Inlet and Kachemak Bay near Homer, king salmon fishing is a year-round endeavor. Even during the short days of December, a small and particularly hardy fleet of hard-core salts brave dark waters and freezing spray to catch "winter" or "feeder" kings—fish drawn to area kelp beds and shoals by rich baitfish stocks.

The largest of the Pacific salmon, kings are considered big game by anglers who get a kick out of battling fish the size of young moose calves. Southcentral kings generally average 25 to 30 pounds in weight, though much larger fish are caught each summer. The state sportfishing record, famously taken in the Kenai River in 1985, was a king that weighed 97 pounds, 4 ounces. Even more incredible was a 126-pound king caught by commercial fishermen in 1949 near Petersburg in Southeast Alaska.

For Alaska anglers, and for those who visit the state's waters each summer, the holy grail of salmon would be a 100-pound king, a new record breaker that every angler believes is still out there.

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I'm reminded from time to time, perhaps while listening to fish stories or when watching others fish, that young anglers can be barbarous creatures. The boy who still resides within me, behind the thinning hair and beard going silver, once sought validation in the trophy. His mission was to catch a limit of fish or, better, one *extraordinary* fish, and bring it home—for the table, of course—but also to prove something about himself to others. To a young fisherman, a big fish lost or released proves nothing to those who are not present to witness the catch for themselves.

On that June night with my big king salmon charging toward the Susitna River only a couple of bends downstream, that old line of thought returned. I needed to land that fish.

Leaning back against the stubby graphite fishing rod, shoulders tensed, forearms burning, I worked to gain control. My goal was to turn the king before it reached the end of the pool. If it broke through, it would likely continue downstream into the Susitna, gaining leverage with the current. Nearly a half-mile wide and pushing 50-foot trees and other debris, the glacial Susitna is strong and swift; a guy wouldn't have a chance of boating a giant salmon there.

The fish thundered toward the end of the pool, thrashing its head and tail to break my grip. Mark maneuvered the drift boat to help me retain leverage and, at the very last moment, I somehow managed to turn the salmon above the rapids at the pool's downstream edge. The fish then charged straight at me, headed for the shadowy depths beneath the boat in the pool's center and leaving my line to fall slack. I reeled frantically for fear the hook would fall free.

Southcentral Alaska's salmon runs continue with the mid-June arrival of sockeye or, as they're called here, "red" salmon. These 6- to 10-pound powerhouses are favorites for several reasons: Foremost, reds are considered by many to be the finest eating of all Pacific salmon. Sea-bright red salmon are savored for their slightly oily, omega-3-rich, deep-orange-colored fillets.

Next, many believe reds fresh from the sea fight harder pound-for-pound than any other salmon species, testing anglers' skills and equipment with sizzling runs and spinning leaps.

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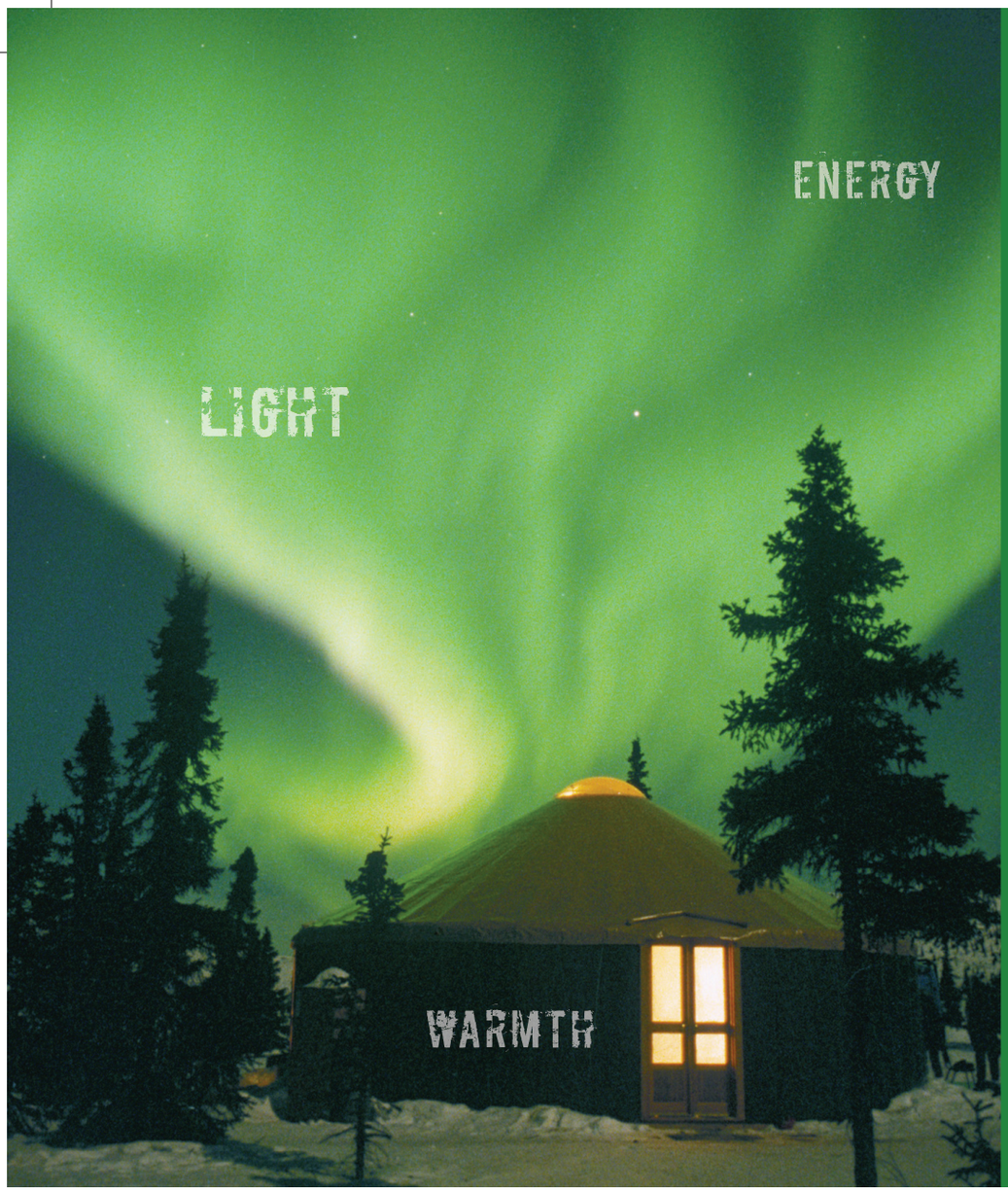
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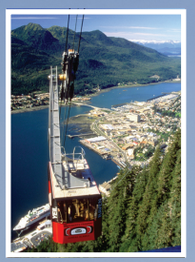
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lievable numbers to some river systems. I happened to be fishing the Kenai last July on an afternoon when more than 230,000 reds stormed the river. (That single-day count translates to roughly *2 million pounds* of fresh fish, or a good deal more than enough to provide a 1-pound dinner serving to each and every citizen of Seattle, San Francisco and Anchorage.) On the river that day, every man, woman and child with a rod seemed to be wrestling salmon as fish jumped, rolled and splashed by the thousands.

Look for the best red salmon fishing to start around mid-June on the Kenai Peninsula's Russian and upper Kenai rivers near the Sterling Highway community of Cooper Landing. Later on, around mid-July through the first week or so of August, a second pulse of reds roars into the lower Kenai River. These fish are caught at access points near the towns of Sterling, Soldotna and Kenai.

One rule anglers must remember is that salmon keep their own calendars. Their arrivals are governed largely by elements of nature—variances in ocean currents, fluctuations in river levels and various other factors. As a result, the reds might show up in swarms to Southcentral's Russian River on the mid-June season opener one summer, while the next season, fish might not appear in large numbers until a week or more later.

Similar generalities apply to forecasts of salmon-run strengths, a guessing game frustrating to the most seasoned fisheries biologists. Suffice it to say that Pacific salmon are subject to cycles of abundance and paucity. A summer of outstanding fishing for a particular species might be followed by a season of slow, spotty action for another species. Or vice versa.

As unpredictable as salmon can be, anglers can take steps to increase their odds of finding good fishing. Research run timings of the species you hope to pursue in the waters you choose to visit. Get started by visiting the Division of Sport Fish page on the Alaska Department of Fish and Game website at www.adfg.alaska.gov.

Next, plan to spend a decent amount of

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time on a given stream, since a day or two can make an enormous difference. Last summer, the wave of 230,000 red salmon hit the Kenai River on July 17. Two days earlier, only 2,900 reds—a mere trickle—were counted.

Also, always have in your pocket a Plan B, in case your primary fishing plan falls through. In recent summers, spotty king salmon runs in some Southcentral streams forced early fishing-season closures. Anglers counting on casting for king salmon in only those streams affected by closures left disappointed. A good Plan B might include booking a saltwater charter out of the Southcentral port of Whittier, Seward or Homer. King salmon fishing is often good in these waters, even when regional streams are experiencing small runs or flooding from wet weather. And fishing for other species out of these ports—including coho, halibut, lingcod and rockfish—is frequently fantastic.

Finally, Alaska salmon are savored for the sport they provide, but more than anything else, they are considered food. Where trout and grayling—present year-round—are commonly released to fight another day, salmon arrive each summer to feed us. Here in Southcentral, even the laws discourage us from playing with our food: "A king salmon 20 inches or longer that is removed from salt or fresh water must be retained and becomes part of the bag limit of the person who originally hooked the fish." A similar law applies to silver salmon caught in area streams.

Next in Southcentral Alaska's summertime salmon procession are pinks and chums, followed by cohos, the final salmon of the season. Although pinks and chums are regarded by some as lesser salmon, perhaps because the flesh of these species tends to be paler, and their general appearance slightly less appealing (upon entering fresh water, male pink salmon sprout pronounced, Brahma bull–like humpbacks, while chums turn a green with purple-striped sides), these less popular salmon have their followers.

Look for pinks and chums in the



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streams of Turnagain Arm, south of Anchorage, and in the tributaries of the Susitna River north of town via the Parks Highway, in mid- to late July. Pink salmon runs taper by early to mid-August, while fresh chums may enter streams well into September.

Pinks are small salmon, ranging from 3 to 6 pounds apiece. Easily taken on light tackle, they return to many waters in great numbers, which often makes them can't-miss targets for newer anglers and children.

Chums are bigger than pinks, ranging in weight from 6 to 12 pounds, and occasionally larger. Chums fight like freight trains, often running fast, hard and deep after grabbing spinners, spoons or streamer flies.

Good fishing for pinks and chums is found in streams such as Bird Creek, about a 20-minute drive on the Seward Highway south of Anchorage; Glacier Creek near the ski resort community of Girdwood; and Resurrection Creek, which tumbles through the rustic gold-mining community of Hope on Turnagain Arm's south side. In the Susitna Valley, good fishing for both species is found along the Parks Highway in Willow, Little Willow, Sheep and Montana creeks, among many others.

As pink salmon runs fade, a new game moves into local waters. For some anglers, the arrival of coho, or "silver," salmon to Southcentral streams marks the beginning of summer's end. For many others, the presence of fresh silvers means fishing season has just begun. Quick to pounce on any variety of spoons, spinners, baits and flies, these high-jumping, hard-running fish are local favorites. Averaging 8 to 12 pounds, with some growing much larger, silvers are stalked with medium-weight tackle.

Early silvers occasionally arrive in regional streams with the pinks in mid-July, and saltwater anglers in Resurrection Bay out of Seward often get into good silver fishing as early as late June. However, silver runs peak in Susitna Valley streams north of Wasilla in mid-August, while outstanding fishing can be enjoyed from mid-July through October in the Kenai River.

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Back on the river that June evening, my contest against the big king salmon continued. I'd countered its charge under the boat by taking up the slack line quickly and pulling back hard to keep the hook set in the fish's jaw. For a while, the king sulked unseen on the deep pool's bottom, unmovable, a dead weight against my rod. My arms were tired, but I couldn't afford to let the fish rest. My only chance of winning was to wear it out. I pulled back on the rod slowly, but forcefully, and sure enough, the king ran.

Once more it raced for the end of the pool, and again I held fast and turned it just before it made the rapids. This time, however, when I hauled back on the rod, the king boiled the surface. I saw a flash of its head—bigger than a man's—and a flank far broader than my thigh.

Mark steered the boat onto a cobble bar where I stepped out to try to finish the fight. For a moment, the fish tugged hard, shook its head and made a weak effort to run. I heaved back again, and this time, Mark was there with the net.

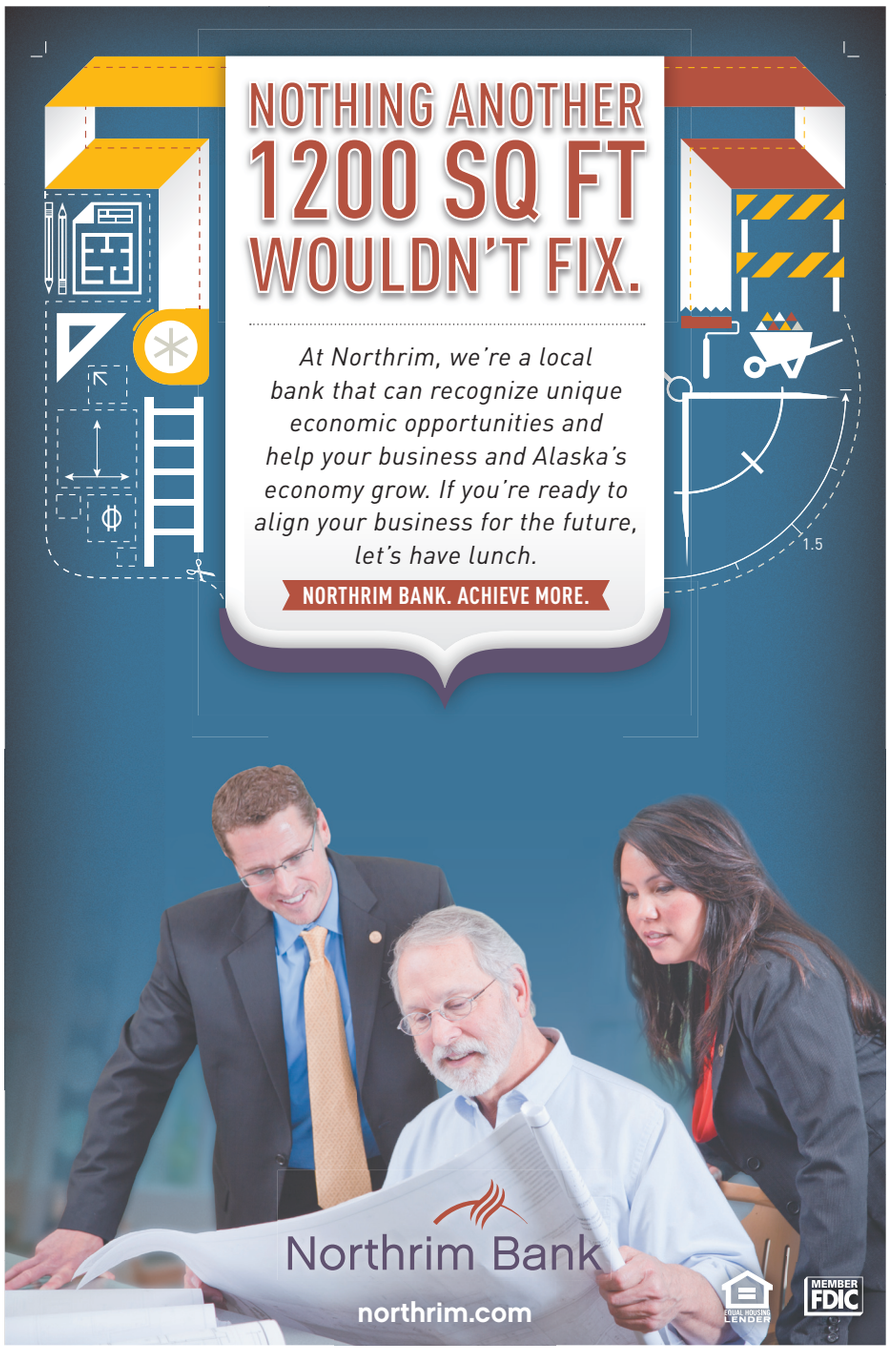
Had that salmon broken free, I know it would have grown in size, its proportions distorted into legend. But when I hefted it over the cobbles, the truth became forever set: The big king weighed a solid 50 pounds, likely a few more. A scale at the landing would later confirm my estimate.

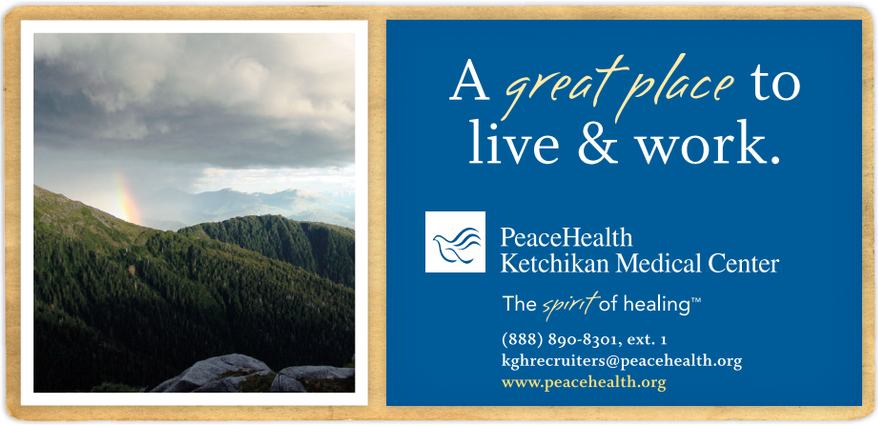
For a moment, the boy within triumphed. But as that glow eventually faded, I realized that every fish caught, no matter how large, is a gift, even here in Alaska where salmon sometimes seem to outnumber the leaves on the trees. ▲▲

Ken Marsh lives in Anchorage where he fishes avidly and works as regional information officer for the Alaska Division of Sport Fish.

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Seasonal Festivities

Anchorage celebrates winter with its unique Fur Rendezvous

By Eric Lucas | Photos by Clark James Mishler

I ran as hard as I could. We all did. Even so, the reindeer won. ■ That's only appropriate, as the most popular event in one of America's most colorful community festivals stars Arctic ungulates. The Running of the Reindeer in Anchorage's Fur Rendezvous features a dozen reindeer and 400 bipeds (that's us) slogging along in corn snow on downtown Anchorage's West Fourth Avenue beneath a low, midwinter sun and a mild breeze, hefting snow boots in a "race" run purely for the joy of celebrating winter. ■ And celebrating the unique lifestyles of Anchorage and Alaska, with events ranging from basketball tournaments to art markets, snowball fights to community theater. ■ In our race down Fourth Avenue, the reindeer had a few advantages, among which were greater experience with the exigencies of cantering through mushy snow, and a nice head start. Their counterparts—we running-with-reindeer enthusiasts who had paid an entry fee or won some contest awarding this privilege—claimed as our advantage the sheer exhilaration of such a midwinter diversion. Spectators by the thousands rooted from the sidewalks of Anchorage's busiest downtown boulevard, and mostly they cheered for the reindeer. A good time was had by all, though the reindeer definitely sported the same nonplussed expression you see on dogs made to wear silly hats in holiday photos. ■ "There is no better way to enjoy Alaska than playing outdoors," says Anchorage resident and tour operator Laura Welsh. "I was in the inaugural Running of the Reindeer and now it's an annual event. What a hoot that was!"

A traditional Native blanket toss (left) and the Running of the Reindeer are among the most popular events at the Fur Rendezvous festival. About 1,200 people participate in the reindeer run in three heats.



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Anchorage's annual Fur Rendezvous, held each February, is billed as a "Celebration of Winter" or "Frontier Spirit." Fur Rondy executive director Susan Duck describes it as "a celebration of life in Alaska." Really, it's a celebration of distinction: Alaska's major urban area has nearly 300,000 residents, all of whom seem thoroughly dedicated to the uniqueness of the place they call home.

At latitude 61 degrees north, Anchorage is one of the northernmost major cities in the world, and with a lot of winter available to celebrate, Fur Rondy is a splendid example of festive alchemy. This year, approximately 5,000 people will participate in more than 25 official events (and dozens of unofficial companion events) from February 24 through March 4. More than 100,000 will join in as spectators. Playing, performing, competing, recreating, trading, buying and selling, storytelling and just generally having fun, Rondy-goers pretty much own the city for its 10-day run. Visitors are welcome to watch or to take part, preferably both, and either way I can attest that there is nothing else like it on the continent.

The festival dates back to a visionary idea conceived by Anchorage community leader Vern Johnson in 1935. Back then Anchorage was still basically a frontier town, long after the Klondike gold frenzy and the tent city along Ship Creek that sprang up with the construction of the Alaska Railroad, and

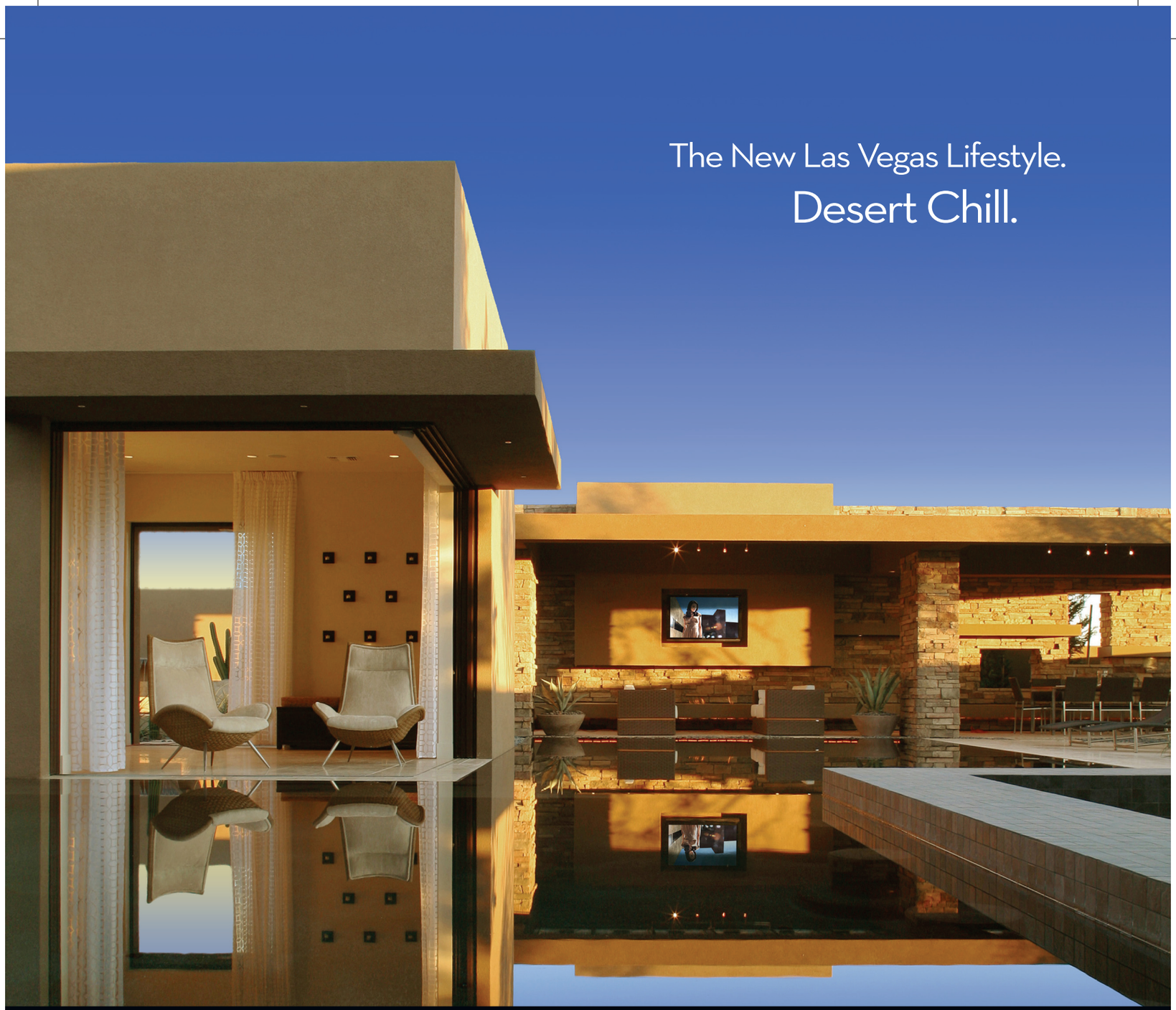


long before North Slope oil brought a new prosperity to the city. In 1935 there were only 3,000 residents, and Johnson decided a midwinter festival was just the thing to relieve the tedium of the season. Skiing, hockey, basketball, boxing and a sled dog race for kids marked the first Fur Rondy, which coincided with the time that Alaska trappers traditionally gathered on Cook Inlet to sell their furs.

Fur auctions remain a part of the festival—today drawing thousand-dollar silver fox skins, as well as youngsters barely big enough to peer up at the auction stage above Ship Creek between the waistbands of adults. "Did you trap these yourself, young fellow?" the auctioneer asks one such. He nods. "Well, let's get a good price for these very practical skins,"

Top: The Saturday evening Fireworks Extravaganza lights up the sky over Anchorage. Above: The Rondy Grand Parade is just one of many fun-filled activities at Fur Rondy.

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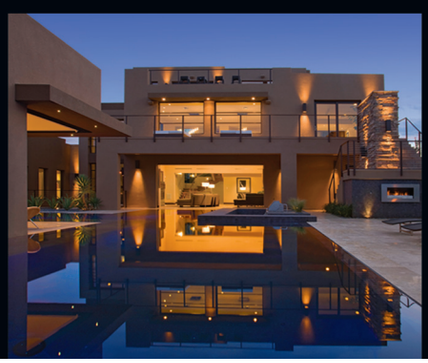


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the auctioneer says as he starts the bidding for two dozen muskrat pelts. They turn out to be worth considerably less than silver fox—but not to the 9-year-old boy who has thus started his college fund. I'm struck by the fact this is likely little different from the scene I might have witnessed almost a century ago, and it reflects the more substantial side of Fur Rondy: The festival brings a huge boost to the local economy.

Meanwhile, trading of a different sort takes place at a multitribal gathering of Alaska's many indigenous peoples, who bring to Fur Rondy a wealth of unique art and crafts, including Native-carved walrus ivory. And many of the initial Rondy events—basketball and hockey tournaments, and sled dog racing—remain key facets. The All Alaskan Basketball Classic draws recreational teams from around the state, each competing for a cherished trophy in a sport that Alaskans embrace fervently. The World Championship Outdoor Hockey Tournament offers a contest in a sport that traditionalists believe is best played outside, where it began. Dogs participate in events such as sprint races and the World Championship Dog Weight Pull that pits canines against cargo. All breeds are welcome at the latter, and the record is currently held by a pair of St. Bernards that pulled 5,220 pounds of sled and cargo over the 25-foot course. Yes, that's more than 2½ tons. Can your pickup do that?





Aside from historical tradition, trading, fundraising and sport, Fur Rendezvous inspires a fun-loving community spirit that Anchorage residents cherish and embellish at every opportunity. That's why so many events are unique—and meaningful, and productive, and effervescent, and a hundred other qualities that sometimes defy description. The reindeer run, for example, was conceived as the Anchorage answer to the famous running of the bulls in Pamplona, Spain. Not only are bulls rare in Alaska, reindeer are far more docile.

To be sure, Rondy has mainstream facets in common with any community festival. There's a parade through city streets, with tractors, old cars and marching bands. But in this parade, the festival kings, queens and princesses perched atop convertibles are wearing furs because they need to, and the "King Regent" and "Queen Regent" must have been Alaska residents for at least 40 years. There is a 5K run, but this one is called the "Frostbite Footrace" and has a parallel, secondary persona, the "Costume

Clockwise from top: In the Fur Rondy World Championship Sled Dog Races, mushers race down Fourth Avenue; Daisy Demientieff shows her handwoven baskets at the Native Arts Market; and local Keystone Kops help "enforce" the sale of Fur Rondy pins—a festival fundraising effort—at the Grand Parade.

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Fur Rondy hockey tournaments played on outdoor rinks include a variety of age groups.

Fun Run," during which runners wearing just their long johns are interspersed among the more sensibly attired participants. You'll see people dressed as famous rock bands (Kiss); moms pushing strollers with ultralayered tots inside; sorcerers, chefs, ballet dancers, literary characters—the creative mix varies from year to year.

Rondy also has fireworks, carnival rides, a ball, pancake breakfasts and spaghetti suppers, and much more. Its second weekend includes the ceremonial start of the ultra-high-profile Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Alaska's biggest event.

The numerous more-novel events reflect the deep-seated Alaskan penchant for irreverent transformation of what Lower 48ers might consider hassles into happenings. Aside from running with reindeer, residents and visitors will:

- Play softball on ice- and snow-covered fields, wearing snowshoes. Balls can be pitched and sometimes hit by snowshoe-clad players, but that's where the similarity to real softball ends. Fly balls are seldom caught, unless chance takes the ball directly into a fielder's glove; ground balls are rarely fielded. "Runners" hobble along as if they were Tolkien's Ents, in molasses, and shoes fly off in all directions. Laughter exceeds athletic achievement, by far, and by design.
- Pitch snowballs at each other in a competitive sport. Yukigassen was imported from Japan last year and proved hugely popular. Yes, it is a grown-up version of the sport, snow forts and all, that kids play in snowy climes. Here there are rules and scores … mostly. The Japanese teams, for whom this is a genuinely competitive game, take the event far more seriously than the pickup Anchorage teams, who are clearly out on the city's "park strip" just to have a good snowball fight.
- Toil along snow-covered Fourth Avenue pushing and pulling "outhouses" mounted on skis in a real race—that is, there are winners. The slowest team is awarded the dreaded Red Lantern trophy. Why outhouses? These are icons of Alaska life (there's even an outhouse showcased in the Univer-



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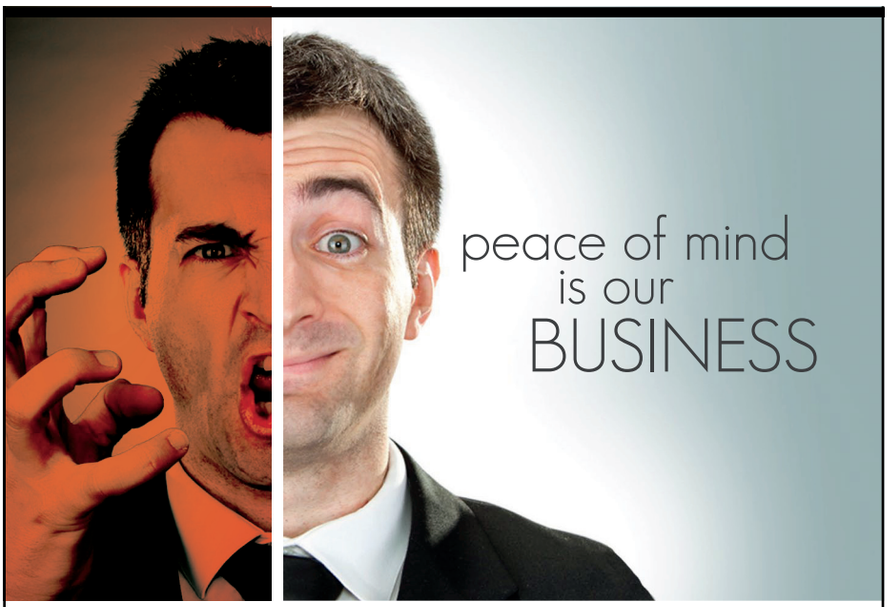
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sity of Alaska Museum of the North in Fairbanks), and someone decades ago was dreaming up something to do to, as the sponsoring Architecture and Engineering Club at the University of Alaska Anchorage puts it, "have fun in February."

Billing itself the "world's largest" (there

Fairbanks Festival

Fairbanks' annual BP World Ice Art Championships is a monthlong event in late February and early March that most Americans might consider a winter art carnival. Massive blocks of ice are carved into fanciful shapes and placed on exhibit in a snowy park. But in the heart of Alaska's Interior, this festival is billed as a "celebration of spring," with more moderate temperatures, and one of Alaska's best-kept secrets, ample sunshine.

This is not to say it's balmy. Ice Alaska organizers hope not, since carvers from around the world flock to Fairbanks to practice their art on blocks of ice cut from an on-site pond at the new George Horner Ice Art Park.

Here, beginning February 28, more than 70 carving teams will create more than 300 sculptures ranging upward of 20 feet tall and embracing every topic from classic mythology to completely original visions. Sculptures may be created from massive single blocks, or several blocks; carvers use chainsaws, hand tools, hand torches and other devices to shape the ice. Teams come from not only Alaska but Canada, Russia, Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Carving takes place between February 28 and March 9, and the sculptures remain on display as long as weather permits.

A skating rink, ice mazes and concessions (hot chocolate, of course) round out the attractions at the ice park.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Fairbanks, a Native arts gathering, a Jewish film festival and two sled dog sprint races draw thousands of participants and spectators in late February and early March. The highlight is the GCI Open North American Championship March 16–18, starting in downtown Fairbanks—the world's oldest continuously run sled dog race.

Early March is also prime time for Northern Lights viewing. Skies are often clear and the aurora display, though unpredictable, can be sensational. Numerous lodges and tour operators in the area welcome Northern Lights travelers. For more information, visit www.explorefairbanks.com. —*E.L.*

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are also outhouse races near Reno, Nevada, among other places), Rondy's second-most-popular event annually draws teams from Anchorage's Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson composed of soldiers who run in, well, let's call them "swimsuits." The windchill is 10 below and the military folks claim they are "plenty warm" when questioned by the announcer running the PA system at this wildly popular event.

- Produce an annual melodrama written, scored, choreographed, staged and performed entirely by local residents for the obvious pleasure of local residents. One can hardly describe the plot and message, but the script invariably pokes fun at the Lower 48 and even the state's own politicians.

As with many Fur Rondy events, a unique tradition rules in this theater: Bags of popcorn are sold to the audience, and provided to all the kids, whose job is to fling it at the bad guy whenever he appears. It's hard to imagine children having more fun, and the sheer good humor of the play, the performers and the audience makes it a merry affair for everyone.

If there is any event that's utterly serious at Fur Rendezvous, it might be the Fur Rondy Open World Championship sled dog race, a mushing contest older than the Iditarod, which starts a week later. Sprint race fans consider theirs a purer form of the sport. Racers run their teams all-out—

Lodging Options

Copper Whale Inn: This delightful boutique property is within a few minutes' walk of many Fur Rendezvous events, and the start of the Tony Knowles Trail. www.copperwhale.com.

Hotel Captain Cook: The largest and best-known full-service business hotel in Anchorage, with extensive dining, shopping and meeting facilities. Major attractions and Fur Rondy venues are within easy walking distance. www.captaincook.com.

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no stopping, no resting—over a 25-mile course through Anchorage and environs, along the city's extensive trail network and up and down city streets. Heats take place three days in a row. With a purse of $85,000, it's one of the premier events in its sport and, dating back to 1946, it's one of the oldest sled dog events around.

Visitors who want to see what it's like out on the trails can strap on rental skis and whisk along the same paths used by the sled dog sprint teams: part of Anchorage's world-class 200-plus-mile recreation-trail network. White birches shimmer in the sun; a gentle breeze lifts spruce branches; and jays chatter in the woods. As we stride, the snow yields a sibilant sound that reflects springlike warmth, rather than the squeak of winter crust.

"Boy, winter is tough up here," I jest to my ski-outing guide, Anchorage native Jack Bonney.

"It's our best-kept secret," he agrees.

Such an experience illustrates a significant community underpinning to Fur Rondy. While outsiders might find windchills the epitome of Alaska winter, such days are rare, and this week, in fact, usually marks the turning of the corner for Alaskans. Daylight has returned from its late-December low, yielding 11 full hours at the beginning of March, and the sun shines a lot. When there is a lack of snow, city crews haul in snow for street events such as the sled dog sprints and outhouse races. Though north winds can bring windchills, the next day may bring warm breezes and temperatures balmy enough to stroll the city in a light jacket. One can sometimes find a bench in front of a south-facing building and sit and sunbathe for a spell. In Anchorage, in February! The same is true 260 miles farther north, in Fairbanks, where an equally engaging string of events greets the return of substantial daylight (see page 108).

That's certainly reason enough for a fling of frivolity.

But it's much more than frivolity. Almost all Fur Rondy events raise money—if money is involved at all—for charitable causes. The outhouse races, for example, fund an annual expedition by University of Alaska Anchorage students to head south and work for Habitat for Humanity. Melodrama proceeds benefit local music students. The Running of the Reindeer provides funds to Toys for Tots. The Miners and Trappers Ball raises funds for a variety of local charities under the guidance of local Lions Clubs. The grand total raised each year, for all events, surpasses $325,000.

And, in an era where much political fuss is made over the need for financial self-actualization, Fur Rondy is completely self-supporting: A huge part of the half-million-dollar budget is derived from the annual sale of Rendezvous pins, which brought in more than $300,000 last year. Designed by local artists, these enamel lapel pins are collectors' items in Alaska. It's common at Fur Rondy events to see a longtime resident sporting his or her entire collection. Hang all those pins on a muskrat coat, and you could have the quintessential Fur Rendezvous attire.

But it's hard to say exactly what is quintessential Fur Rondy attire. I can't help noticing a few "costumes" while I trudge as fast as I can down Fourth Avenue with a dozen reindeer and, well, other creatures. Behind me is Tinkerbell. Next to me is "Barrel Man," clad in a whiskey barrel hung from his shoulders by red suspenders.

"Should have gone to the fur auction," I suggest to him.

He grins.

"There's always next year."

No doubt about that. ▲

Eric Lucas writes from Seattle. He ran with the reindeer in 2011.

For more information on Fur Rendezvous, visit the Web at www.furrondy.net.

GETTING THERE

Alaska Airlines offers daily service to Anchorage and Fairbanks. To book a complete Alaska Airlines Vacations package to Alaska, go to alaskaair.com or call 866-500-5511.

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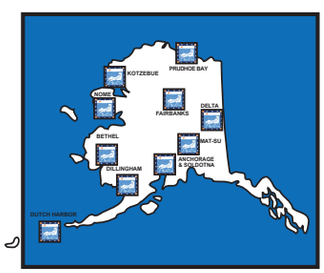


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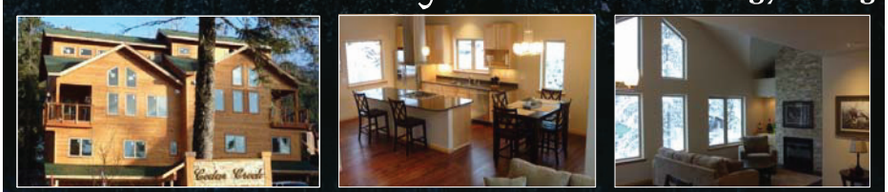
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Lovely Loreto

Outstanding recreation in and around this beautiful Baja town

By Rick Stedman



MEXICO / ALAMY

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The No. 15 championship tee at Loreto Baja Golf Course sits atop a cliff from which I must drive my ball over a large estuary, and also avoid multiple sand bunkers surrounding the green, if I want to make par on this 222-yard par-3.

I should be concentrating on my objective, but I can't help being distracted. Competing for my attention are the azure Sea of Cortés … and a mile of sandy beach … and the Spanish Colonial– and Pueblo Revival–style homes in Las Villas de Mexico at Loreto Baja … and the bell tower of the Inn at Loreto Bay … and Punta Nopoló, the rocky point just behind the green.

I turn to LesLee, my friend and golf-cart driver. "Do I take this shot?" I motion with my chin toward the green. "Or that shot?" I nod my head toward the panoramic view.

She pulls out the camera with a smile. "Do you really have to ask? Take the photo, and then the shot."

I'm sure I'm not the first golfer to get out a camera at this fabulous David Duval–designed layout. The public course—which recently changed its name from Loreto Bay Golf Course and is in the village of Nopoló, about five miles south of downtown Loreto—was originally designed by Pedro Guereca and Mario Schjetnan in 1991. Duval, the 2001 British Open winner, completed a major renovation of the course in 2008, with a focus on eco-friendliness, including saltwater- and reclaimed-water-irrigated grass (a salt-tolerant seashore paspalum), organic fertilizers, and mangrove estuaries along the sides to provide habitat for birds and other animals.

The par-72, 6,811-yard design features numerous sand traps and water features that challenge golfers of all skill levels, while breathtaking views of the Sea of Cortés and the peaks of the Sierra de la Giganta provide solace if you double bogey.

The spectacular course has helped to make Loreto—known as the Baja Peninsula's oldest colonial town, dating to the 1697 establishment of Misión de Nuestra Señora de Loreto—a popular travel destination. Another outstanding area attraction is the Loreto Bay National Marine Park, part of the Islands and Protected Areas of the Gulf of California UNESCO World Heritage Natural Site. The nearly 800-square-mile park is home to animals such as ospreys, grebes and blue-footed boobies; jewel moray eels and Cortez damselfish; whale sharks, dolphins and sea lions; and blue, gray, fin, humpback and sperm whales.

Visitors from around the world come to Loreto for its outstanding whale-watching,

Left: A sea kayaker paddles through the clear water off Isla Carmen, one of the many islands near Loreto. Above: Musicians perform in Loreto.

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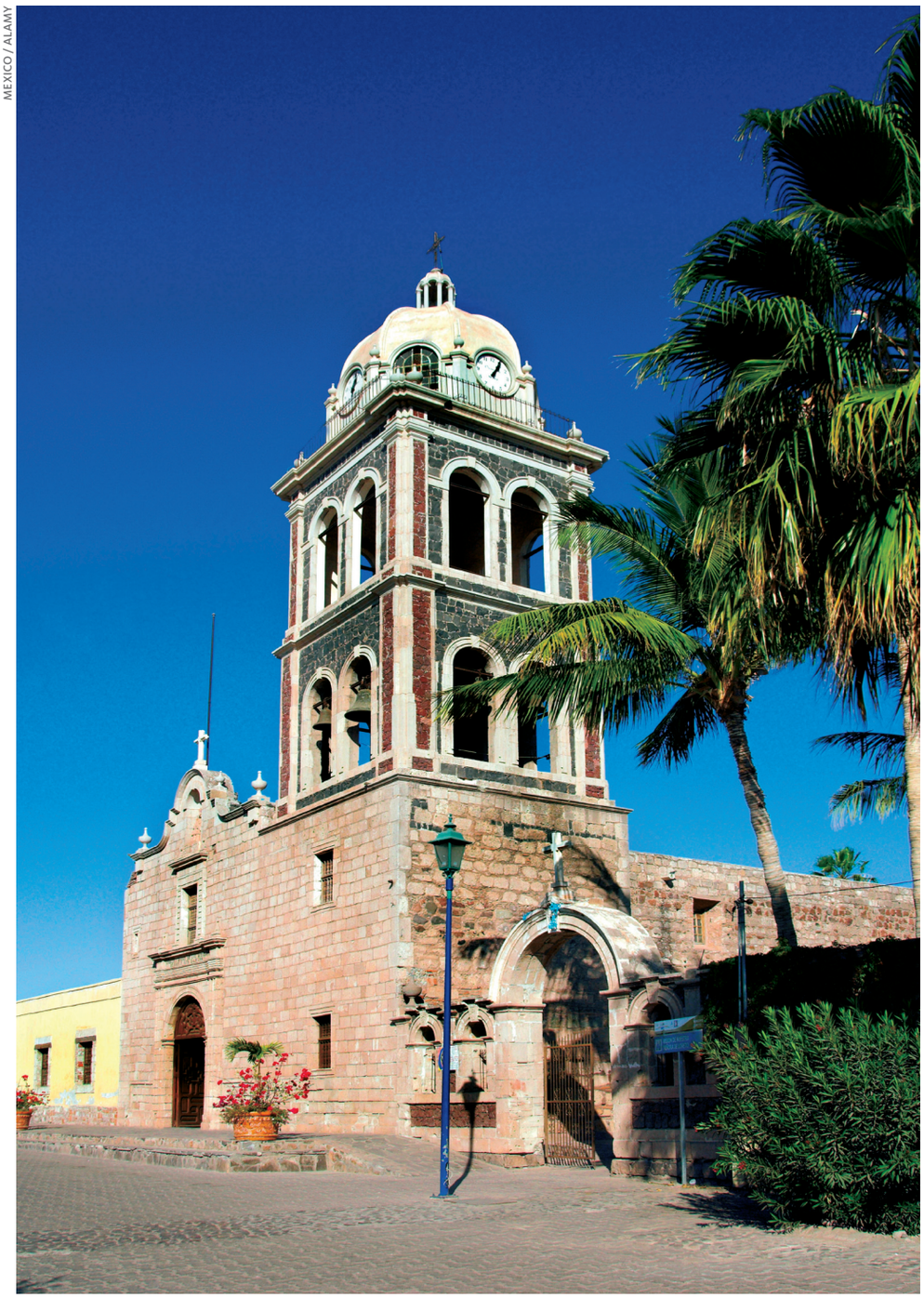
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Left: The church at the historic Misión de Nuestra Señora de Loreto. Above: A portion of the church's beautiful interior.

snorkeling, scuba diving, sportfishing, sailing, kayaking and eco-tours related to monitoring sea turtle populations in the marine park. LesLee and I enjoy a wonderful whale-watching sunset cruise with Cast N Reel Charters, which offers deep-sea sportfishing and whale-watching tours from the comfort of a 50-foot yacht. We join the "ooohs" and "aaahs" as gray whales appear a dozen different times during our cruise.

Loreto visitors also enjoy activities such as boat tours to Coronado Island—one of the five islands near Loreto and protected as part of the marine park—and land tours to see Neolithic rock art and cave paintings in central Baja.

Uninhabited Coronado Island, about a 30-minute boat trip from Loreto, is home to a sea lion colony, and has scenic coves with crystal-clear waters for snorkeling, plus white-sand beaches and an approximately quarter-mile interpretive trail with information about plants and trees.

On the ancient-art tours, visitors can see depictions of humans and animals that date back thousands of years, inspiring appreciation for the early inhabitants of this region. Some tours leave from Loreto, while others leave from towns such as Mulegé, approximately 85 miles north of Loreto, and San Ignacio, approximately 170 miles north of Loreto. Some of the best art is outside San Ignacio in the Sierra San Francisco, about a five-hour drive north of Loreto. The region's prehistoric art is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

If you're going to San Ignacio sometime between the end of December and the beginning of April, you may want to include a side trip to Laguna San Ignacio. You can take a guided tour of the lagoon, which is an excellent place to see gray whales. Guided tours to the lagoon from Loreto are also available. The whales' arrival and departure times may vary year to year, so inquire locally about their presence if you're visiting during the beginning or end of the whale-watching season.

Virtually all prehistoric-art tours require some hiking, and a few excursions, especially multiday ones, may also include transport by mules. The Mexican

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Spectacular views help to make the Loreto Baja Golf Course, recently renovated by David Duval, a popular Loreto attraction.

government requires visitors to ancient-art sites to purchase a permit and use a guide registered with the National Institute of Anthropology and History. Tour companies and individual national institute–approved guides can assist clients with permit purchases.

Hikers also relish guided day treks to locations such as Tabor Canyon, south of Loreto, where pools of water are framed by giant boulders. Mountain-biking and horseback-riding tours are also available in the Loreto area.

Equally appealing to LesLee and me are leisurely early-morning wanders in downtown Loreto when the streets are empty and the sun is just rising over the glasslike waters of the bay. One morning we get coffee at the Fandango Cafe, then stroll the waterfront *malecón*. Suddenly, we hear a loud splash. Pelicans are diving at astounding speed for breakfast delicacies.

Resources

For more information about visiting Loreto, see www.gotoloreto.com.

Tour-company options include **Arturo Sport** (www.arturosport.com), **Baja Big Fish Co.** (www.bajabigfish.com), **Baja Outpost** (www.bajaoutpost.com), **Cast N Reel Charters** (www.worldwidefishing.com/mexico/b3775/index.html), **Dos Mundos** (www.bajadosmundos.com), **Ecoturismo Kuyimá** (www.kuyima.com), **Grupo Ecologista Antares** (www.gea95.org), **Loreto Sea and Land Eco Tours** (www.loretoseaandland.com), **Mulegé Tours** (www.mulegetours.com), **Tour Baja** (www.tourbaja.com) and **Wild Loreto** (www.wildloreto.com). The **National Institute of Anthropology and History** website (www.inah.gob.mx) has an email form that can be used to inquire about ancient-art sites.

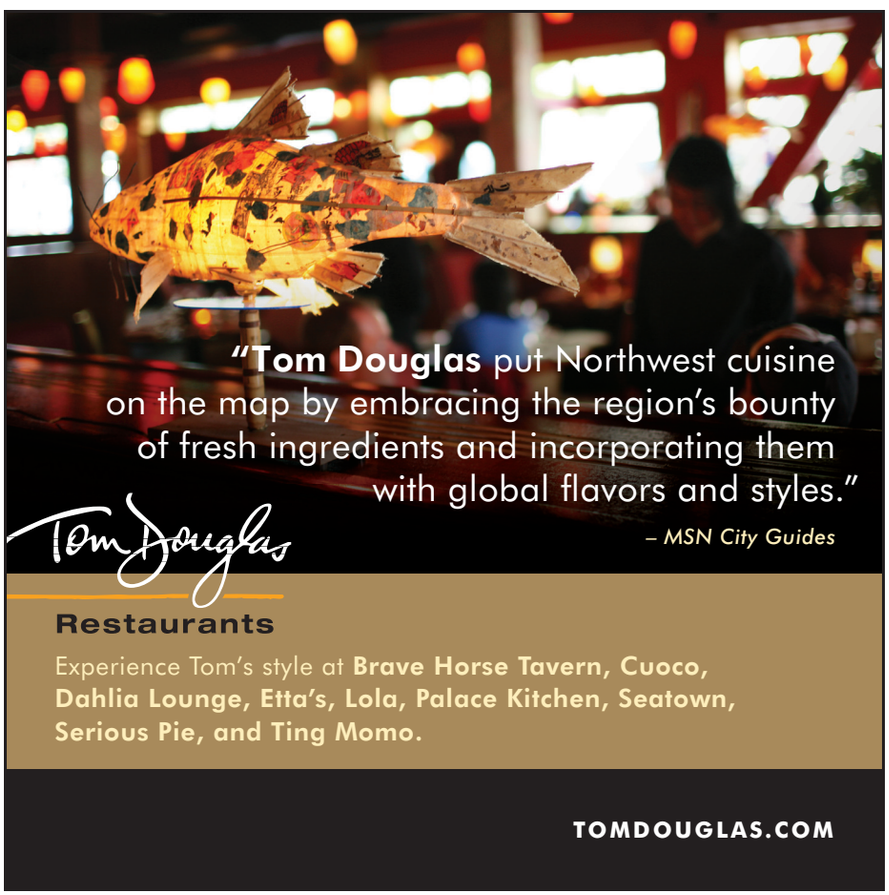
Visitors can take taxis or rent a car at the airport to visit attractions that are not part of a transportation-provided tour, and Villa del Palmar offers free transportation from the resort to downtown Loreto.

Next we stroll past shops displaying Mexican artworks and textiles as we head to the center of town to see the first successful Baja California mission. Misión de Nuestra Señora de Loreto was established by Jesuit priest and explorer Juan María de Salvatierra, who founded Loreto and used this site as the headquarters for subsequent missionary endeavors on the Baja Peninsula. The current stone, Baroque-style mission church dates to 1752. Part of it was damaged by earthquakes, but it has been rebuilt and still functions as an active church. The museum next door displays artifacts and manuscripts related to the peninsula's historic missions.

Numerous companies offer tours of the downtown area that include the impressive church. Excursions are also available to the Misión de San Javier, about 25 miles southwest of Loreto. The second-oldest Jesuit mission, it was established in 1699 along the Arroyo San Javier. In the early 1700s,

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the mission was moved a few miles to its current site, and crops were planted in the surrounding area. Today this area is known for produce such as onions, figs, grapes, dates, olives, citrus fruits, corn and chiles.

LesLee and I have rented a Jeep, so we drive ourselves to the village of San Javier. Walking amid the adobe and stone dwellings, many with thatched roofs, is like stepping back in time, giving us a sense of Old Mexico. Inside the mission's church, where mass is still celebrated, we admire the spectacular gilded altar, which was brought here from the Mexico City area.

Complementing the Loreto area's historical attractions is the luxurious new Villa del Palmar Beach Resort and Spa at the Islands of Loreto, which opened in spring 2011. The resort is the first property in the Villa Group's planned 1,800-acre Loreto development, which is expected to eventually include seven resort hotels, 240 home sites and a Rees Jones–designed golf course, scheduled to open with the first nine holes late this year and an additional nine in 2013.

The inaugural hotel, which faces Danzante Island, just south of Loreto, currently offers 181 spacious suites, along with a sandy beach, four pools, a spa, restaurants and an extensive list of tour options.

"Loreto is one of Mexico's most incredible hidden gems," says Villa Group Resort partner Luz Maria Torres. "We're elated to welcome travelers to such a magical place."

LesLee and I are elated to have experienced such a magical place. When I return home, my photos of the dramatic 15th hole on the Loreto Baja course instantly carry me back to the moment I took that shot and then the other shot. The images also instantly create a desire to return.

Rick Stedman lives in Yakima, Washington.

GETTING THERE

Alaska Airlines (alaskaair.com, 800-ALASKAAIR) provides year-round service to Loreto. For Vacations packages, visit the web or call 800-468-2248.

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Honors Programs

By Michelle Martin

Before Washington State University senior Omar Bayomy started college, he hadn't given much thought to the honors track, other than that he planned to pursue it. His brother had been an honors student at WSU years before, and it was a great experience for him. So when Bayomy was accepted to the honors college as an incoming freshman, the decision to attend was easy. ■ As it turns out, however, it was a decision that has made all the difference. Completing the rigorous requirements of the honors college contributed to Bayomy's academic success and personal growth in ways he couldn't have predicted, he says.

"Now that I've actually gone through [the honors program]," Bayomy says, "I'm extremely happy I chose this path."

The neuroscience major points to two ways WSU's honors college was of particular benefit: the high-caliber courses taught by carefully selected professors and the mandatory honors thesis—an original, culminating work that must go through a thorough review process.

"My top academic experience at WSU has been the honors-thesis project," Bayomy says of his research into proteins in the brain related to sleep. "No other [project] has pushed me as this has. The thesis is the epitome of allowing you to express your creativity and curiosity in a professional manner, to address a question that you're really interested in and to create an impressive piece of work."

Bayomy's thesis was so impressive that in June, he presented a poster summarizing his research at a national conference in his field that was taking place in Minneapolis.

"Certainly this wasn't something I thought I could accomplish as an undergraduate," he says, adding that he couldn't have done his thesis without the school's resources and the support of his professors and other university professionals.

Not only did WSU's honors college challenge Bayomy to conduct his research—something he admits he might not have done as extensively otherwise—administrators also agreed to fund his trip to the conference. In addition, the small, tight-knit community fostered by his program helped him create long-lasting relationships and put him on a path toward success, he says.

HONORS 101

Rather than graduating "with honors"—meaning a student has excelled in overall coursework—honors programs encompass a separate curriculum. Many universities offer one or more honors tracks, which may include core programs and more specialized programs. Honors tracks vary widely from school to school.

At WSU, new students enrolled in the honors college can choose from a diverse selection of core courses, all emphasizing certain skills, such as research methodology. As a result, students of Pamela Lee's Art of Portraiture class emerge with similar basic research skills as those taking Brendan Walker's Principles and Research Methods in Social Sciences class.

At other schools, such as Seattle University, honors students form a group and take the same core courses together. At SU, the general-education requirements are replaced with a set of humanities courses emphasizing historical approaches. The seminar-style classes focus on developing writing proficiency and critical thinking.

Seattle University sophomore Claire Giordano says her writing has improved immensely thanks to the honors program, as has her ability to think critically and make connections between different disciplines. "I'll be emerging in the job market at a time when being able to synthesize information from different areas in cohesive ways will be important," she says.

Later in their college career, students can also complete honors within their majors. For instance, in addition to offering a general-education honors program, the University of Washington offers an honors option within some majors, such as business administration. SU also offers honors-type

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options within some majors.

The honors college at the University of Alaska Anchorage includes three multidisciplinary academic programs: the flagship Core Seminar Program, the Forty-Ninth State Fellows Program and the Complex and Natural Systems Program, which is the college's newest addition.

UAA professor of history Stephen Haycox co-founded the Forty-Ninth State Fellows Program—which focuses on the history of politics and democratic government, and is designed for students in all majors—seven years ago.

"We have very lively discussions," Haycox says. "And we encourage students to have their own ideas and not try to express what they think we want to hear."

Haycox says that when he and political science professor James Muller—whose political views differ from his own—co-teach courses, students can observe how people who are equally committed to understanding a topic and who are exposed to the same information can come away with different opinions. "[Students] come to understand that they don't have to have a single point of view in order to be wise," Haycox says. "They can be learners their whole lives."

COMMON DENOMINATORS

Despite the wide variety of honors programs available, honors courses usually have several things in common. They typically include few lectures, but rather follow a seminar-style format highlighting group discussion and group work. Required readings are often primary- or secondary-source documents, rather than textbook summaries. Classes are small, some with 25 or fewer participants. Professors as well as students are selected to participate based on their skill and enthusiasm, creating an environment of exploration and discovery.

Honors students may share many, if not all, of their classes, fostering a cohesive community that often becomes a strong support network. Personalized advising, priority registration, and special programs and lectures are other perks that students may enjoy.

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ADDED VALUE

There are several benefits to an honors track's smaller class size. One of these is increased mentorship from faculty. WSU's Walker lauds several undergraduate honors students who have had work published in scientific journals, including one student who will graduate in May with at least two, and possibly three, published papers, and with at least one lead authorship.

In addition, talents shine through more easily than in larger classes, WSU's Lee says. For example, she recently recognized something special in one of her honors students and steered her toward the prestigious Fulbright Program. Due to Lee's mentoring, the political science major has applied for a Fulbright grant to study economics in Argentina, and will learn this spring if she's been chosen. "She never would have been in a place where I would have seen the caliber of her work had it not been for the honors classes," Lee says.

Each of the honors programs mentioned in this story boasts winners of prestigious awards, most including Fulbright grants, Truman Scholarships and Rhodes Scholarships.

"As the center for undergraduate research and experiential learning at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the honors college creates unique opportunities driving student success," says Ronald Spatz, dean of UAA's honors college. "Graduates have become Marshall, Truman, NCMR, Goldwater and Fulbright scholars with significant funding to top-tier graduate and professional school programs at both the masters and doctoral levels."

Many honors-program participants say that the smaller classes and more rigorous academic setting have undoubtedly added value to their college education. Lee agrees, pointing out that the student sitting among her class of 25 in the honors section is paying the same fee as the student sitting in the general section with 135 students.

Some honors programs, such as those at Boise State University, also waive the fee normally charged for taking more than the maximum number of credits. Not all honors programs are included in regular tuition,



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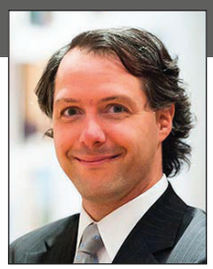
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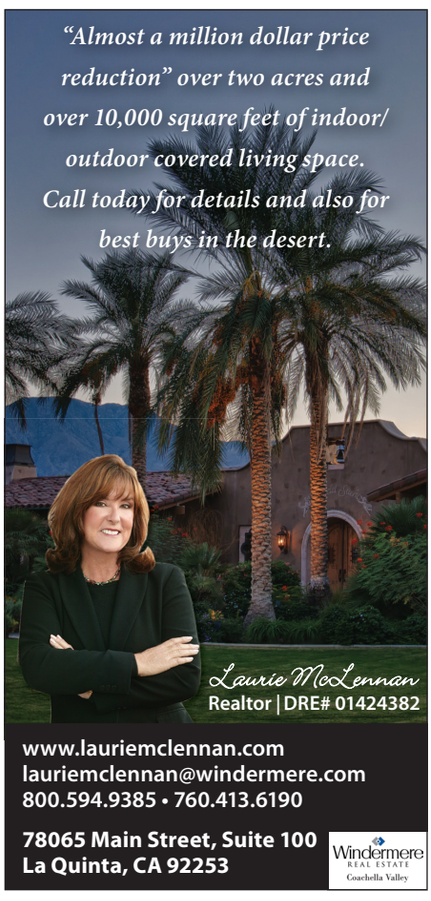

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however. The Robert D. Clark Honors College at the University of Oregon, for instance, charges a fee for honors classes, which are limited to 19 students each.

GETTING IN

In many cases, students apply to an honors program as part of their college application. To improve their chances, students should take the application process seriously and reply to questions comprehensively, if possible highlighting accomplishments that are unusual for people of their age, says Carol Anelli, WSU professor of entomology and former associate dean of the university's honors college. "Include adversity that you've overcome, anything that makes you a little bit different."

And when students apply to an honors program—either as part of their college application or in later years, when they can apply to more specialized honors tracks—they should similarly take time to craft thoughtful responses to questions. It's important to demonstrate familiarity with the program and its goals, showing why it would be a good fit, says James Risser, director of Seattle University's honors program. "[Applicants] should indicate in a precise way how they see themselves making a contribution."

The honors-application process often includes a personal interview. At UAA, the Forty-Ninth State Fellows Program requires applicants to attend a one-hour interview with the two directors, Haycox says. "We're looking for curiosity, potential, a willingness to work and character."

If the challenge of an honors program is intimidating, WSU's Walker puts a neuroscientific spin on why applying extra energy as an undergrad—honors track or not—may have lifelong benefits. The years of late adolescence and early adulthood are a crucial time when the part of the brain that controls critical thinking, logic and other executive functions is finishing its development, he says. "If you challenge yourself, you can change the way you approach life forever. It's true that for the brain, simple principles apply. Use it or lose it."

Michelle Martin writes from Seattle.

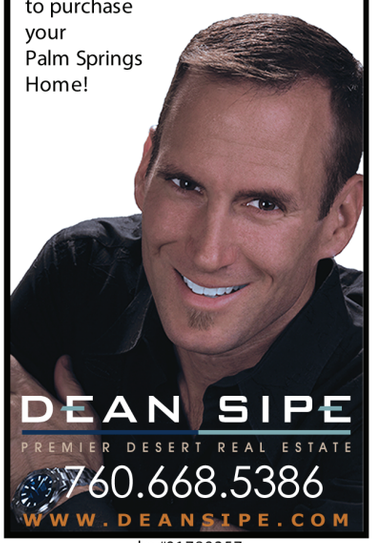
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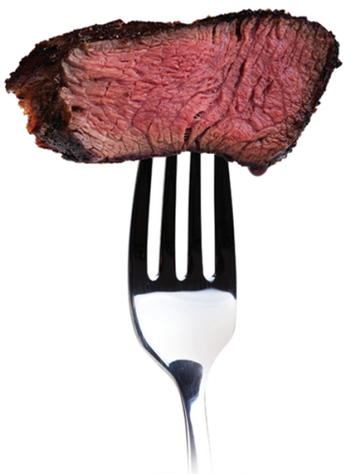
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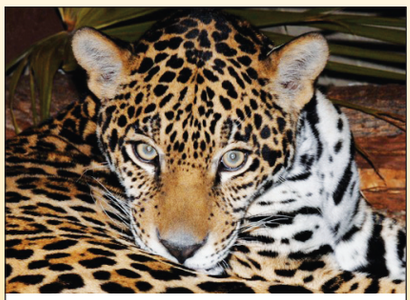


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Nicaragua's lush capital city of Managua was built along the southern shore of Lake Managua. Santiago de los Caballeros Cathedral (far right) lies within the historic section of the city, as do several other landmarks. Modern Managua has sprung up to the east and west of the old town.

Natural Beauty

Exploring Nicaragua's scenic wonders and cultural attractions

By Becky Youman

"Whoa, Mom, there are deer next to the tennis court!" My daughter, Sierra, and I are exploring the Hotel Camino Real in Managua, Nicaragua. We—along with my husband, Bryan—arrived late the night before and were thrilled with the hotel's convenient location just 10 minutes from the airport. Now, in the morning light, we are finding many more delights: two swimming pools, a children's playground, an aviary with raucous macaws, gardens dense with brightly colored heliconia, whimsical sculptures interspersed throughout the expansive grounds and, now, the deer.

It's an apt introduction to this lush country—nicknamed "the land of lakes and volcanoes"—which is slightly larger than New York state. Now well removed from past turmoil, Nicaragua is gaining popularity as a tourist destination, drawing adventurers and beachgoers alike to its diverse terrain. Extensive Atlantic lowlands rise to north-central interior mountains, and the narrow Pacific coastal plain is defined by a chain of volcanoes. Nicaragua offers Pacific and Caribbean beaches; historically rich colonial cities; warm, friendly people; and activities such as surfing, fishing, diving, kayaking, hiking and volcano climbing. All at bargain prices.

Our plan is to spend the day touring the sights of Nicaragua's capital city, located on the southern shore of Lake Managua, and then head to the historic city of Granada.

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Managua, home to almost 30 percent of the country's 5.6 million people, was a prosperous Central American capital in the early 1970s. But then a devastating earthquake struck in 1972, destroying most of the city's infrastructure. Instead of being rebuilt, the old part of the city was left untouched while new developments were constructed to the east and west, away from the lakeside seismic zone. Recently there has been some restoration of public buildings in the otherwise still crumbling historic part of the city, which is what we intend to explore today.



DENNIS COX / ALAMY

Above: The shell of Santiago de los Caballeros Cathedral, built in the 1920s, is among old Managua's main sites. Below: A monument near the lakeshore honors Simón Bolívar, who is revered as a liberator in Central and South America.

But first, in order to get an overview of Managua, we have a cab take us west, toward the city, and then wind southward up the verdant hills to Laguna de Tiscapa, a crater lake and urban nature reserve, located about 15 minutes from our hotel. From a crest above this lake we can see the city spread out along the edge of Lake Managua, with the verdant Momotombo Volcano in the distance. Tall buildings and shopping malls peek above the leafy green canopy in the newer parts of the city.

A small national historic park along the crater lake features one of the city's most famous landmarks—a 60-foot black steel silhouette of national hero Augusto Sandino. The towering monument to the 1920s–'30s revolutionary leader was built next to the remnants of the former presidential palace.

From above, it is hard to see details of the city's ruins, but as we descend, approaching the center of old Managua, we notice cracked walls and empty buildings. Bryan and I find the scene fascinatingly surreal, given the modernity just a few miles away. It is as if we have driven into the pages of a Gabriel García Márquez magic-realist novel, where the illogical is presented as normal.

Our first stop is Revolution Plaza, a large open square ringed by parks, as well as by some of historic Managua's main sites. The most impressive of these is the Santiago de los Caballeros Cathedral. Built in the 1920s, it was greatly damaged in the '72 earthquake. At first glance, the





JEFF GREENBERG / ALAMY

DETAILS

For more information about traveling in Nicaragua, visit the Nicaragua Tourism Board website at www.visitanicaragua.com/ingles or the U.S. State Department website at www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1850.htm. The most popular travel season is between January and April, when the weather is typically driest.

LODGING

Hotel Camino Real: Km 9.5 Carretera Norte, Managua; 011-505-2255-5888; www.caminoreal.com.ni.

Hotel Plaza Colón: On Parque Colón, Granada; 011-505-2552-8489; www.hotelplazacolon.com.

Crowne Plaza Hotel: Its pyramid shape makes this hotel a landmark; Octava Calle Sur Oeste 101, Managua; 011-505-2228-3530; www.ichotelsgroup.com.

Hotel Patio del Malinche: This restored colonial home features lovely patios; Calle El Caimito, de Alcaldía 2 1/2 cuadras al lago, Granada; 011-505-2552-2235; www.patiodelmalinche.com.

DINING

La Cocina de Doña Haydée: Carretera a Masaya km. 4 1/2, Optica Matamoros 1 c. abajo No. 71, Managua; 011-505-2270-6100; www.lacocina.com.ni.

El Zaguán Restaurant: Calle El Arsenal, Granada; 011-505-2552-2522.

ACTIVITIES

Masaya Artisan Crafts Market: Two blocks east of the Parque Central in Masaya; open daily 9 A.M.–6 P.M.

Natural wonders: Nicaragua's 78 protected areas abound with flora and fauna. Visitors can explore Los Guatuzos Wildlife Refuge, a toucan nesting site south of Lake Nicaragua, or Mombacho Cloud Forest Reserve on dormant Mombacho Volcano, home to howler monkeys and hundreds of plant species.

Surfing and sportfishing: San Juan del Sur, on the Pacific coast, is a popular beach destination for surfers. Nicaragua is also known for deep-sea fishing and fly-fishing in its many lakes.

Diving: The Corn Islands, off Nicaragua's east coast near Bluefields, offer excellent diving in Caribbean waters. —*B.Y.*

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imposing multistory structure with its twin towers looks intact, but a closer look reveals something different. We walk up and peer inside—where beams of sunlight illuminate the destruction within—but are not allowed to enter due to the building's instability.

Located adjacent to the cathedral is the intact and impressively restored neoclassical National Palace of Culture, which houses the National Museum. We wander through the pre-Columbian-artifact exhibits and natural-history displays, but by far the most arresting subjects are the photos lining the hallways, showing the city before and after the earthquake.

From there we meander through the city's Central Park to a statue of famed Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, who is celebrated in monuments across the country. We admire the marble statue of the scribe, then walk over to the National Theater, also named for him, which survived the quake. While viewing a temporary exhibit inside, we peek at the opulent red-and-gold auditorium, where major concerts, plays and dance acts are staged.

We are now near the old town's lakeshore esplanade, known as the *malecón*,



DENNIS COX / ALAMY

which is lined with open-air restaurants. After a cab shuttles us there via the busy roundabout anchored by a monument to Simón Bolívar, we seek a brief respite from the heat at a lakeside restaurant. There, watching lake cruises depart, we are revived by ice-cold Toña beer (and Fanta for Sierra).

Later, after a few hours by our hotel's pool, we are set for dinner at La Cocina de Doña Haydée, which features traditional Nicaraguan specialties and is located in the newer part of the city. We heed our waiter's menu suggestions—and heartily approve when the dishes arrive. The chicken *nacatamales*—a unique Nicaraguan dish of corn dough with various fillings, steamed inside plantain leaves that have been folded into pillow-shaped bundles—are moist and delicious. Our favorite dish, however, is the *Indio viejo*, a souplike item with beef, onion, garlic, peppers and tomatoes that are fried with cornmeal and orange juice.


STEFANO PATERNA / ALAMY

Above: A horse-drawn carriage travels along Calle La Calzada, a Granada street with numerous restaurants; the colorful Cathedral of Granada is visible at the end of the street. Below left: The crafts market in Masaya is famous for hammocks and other handmade goods.

Though Managua's booming nightlife scene is worth sampling if you are with adults—dancing is a huge part of Nicaraguan life, and nightclubs with live salsa, merengue, and reggaeton music abound—it is not appropriate for 8-year-olds, so we return to our hotel for a good night's sleep.

THE NEXT MORNING, we set out for Granada, about an hour southeast of Managua. Arriving in this Spanish colonial town that was founded in 1524, I feel even more as if we have stepped inside a García Márquez novel. Anachronistic horse-drawn carriages and oxcarts share the road with shiny new cars, and colonial buildings bear advertisements for cellphone companies.

From our room on the second floor of the Hotel Plaza Colón, we have an amazing view of the town's main square, Parque Colón. The canary-yellow Cathedral of Granada anchors one end of the tree-shaded plaza, while buildings with brightly painted facades surround the rest of it. To the south looms giant Volcano Mombacho, and Lake Nicaragua—which, at more than 3,100 square miles, is the largest lake in Central America—laps at the eastern edge of town.

Sierra can't wait to get downstairs and join the show. Entering the square is like being invited into the city's living room: Old men play cards at rickety tables; women sit gossiping on benches; vendors hawk snacks and souvenirs; kids snap old-fashioned clackers—onomatopoeically called *traca-tracas*—and birds chatter in the trees. The tropical heat slows all movement down to a dreamlike pace.

Hopping into a horse-drawn carriage for a tour of central Granada only heightens our sense of the unreal. Like Managua,

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Granada has also been shaken over the years by earthquakes. The crumbling buildings with empty window frames pierced by flowering tree branches seem perfect for ghosts.

Our driver points out La Polvora, a Spanish fort and gunpowder facility built in 1748 to protect the town from marauding pirates, who would attack the inland city by sailing across Lake Nicaragua via the San Juan River from the Caribbean. We stop to examine the massive walls and climb one of the fort's five thick-walled towers to look out over the city.

For even better views, our driver recommends a trip up the bell tower of Iglesia la Merced, another historical church downtown. After ascending the tight spiral staircase, we are rewarded with breezes and spectacular views. Slanted red-tile roofs are interspersed with impressive churches and monuments. From this vantage, the lake stretches like an ocean.

Our afternoon is again spent at the pool, this time in our hotel's colonial-style courtyard. For dinner we walk across the square to El Zaguán. At this informal steak house, meat is prepared over an open-flame grill. The scent is tantalizing. We order various cuts that arrive succulent and delicious, and accompanied by the fried plantains and yuca root typical of the region.



Mombacho Volcano, viewed from Granada.

LOOK DIE BILDAGENTUR DER FOTOGRAFEN GMBH / ALAMY

The next day we hire a boat to take us out on Lake Nicaragua—a ride that reinforces the otherworldly sense of our trip. Las Isletas, a 365-island archipelago, lies just off the shore from Granada. When Mombacho Volcano erupted 20,000 years ago, it launched rock and lava into the lake. Over time, this natural debris has formed small islands. Most are only large enough for a single home and a canopy of graceful trees; the homes on the islands range from simple wooden structures to mansions.

Motoring slowly through the slalom course of islands, we see cows that have waded out into the lake, grazing in water up to their shoulders; small children rowing their even-younger siblings in canoes; and bicycles stored in tree branches. Graceful white egrets skim the waters while oropendola, yellow-tailed blackbirds, add twigs to their sacklike nests.

Parrots squawk in cages, and pots of bougainvillea decorate the dock at the island restaurant our driver recommends for lunch. Rows of hammocks line the patio, where we swing somnolently while

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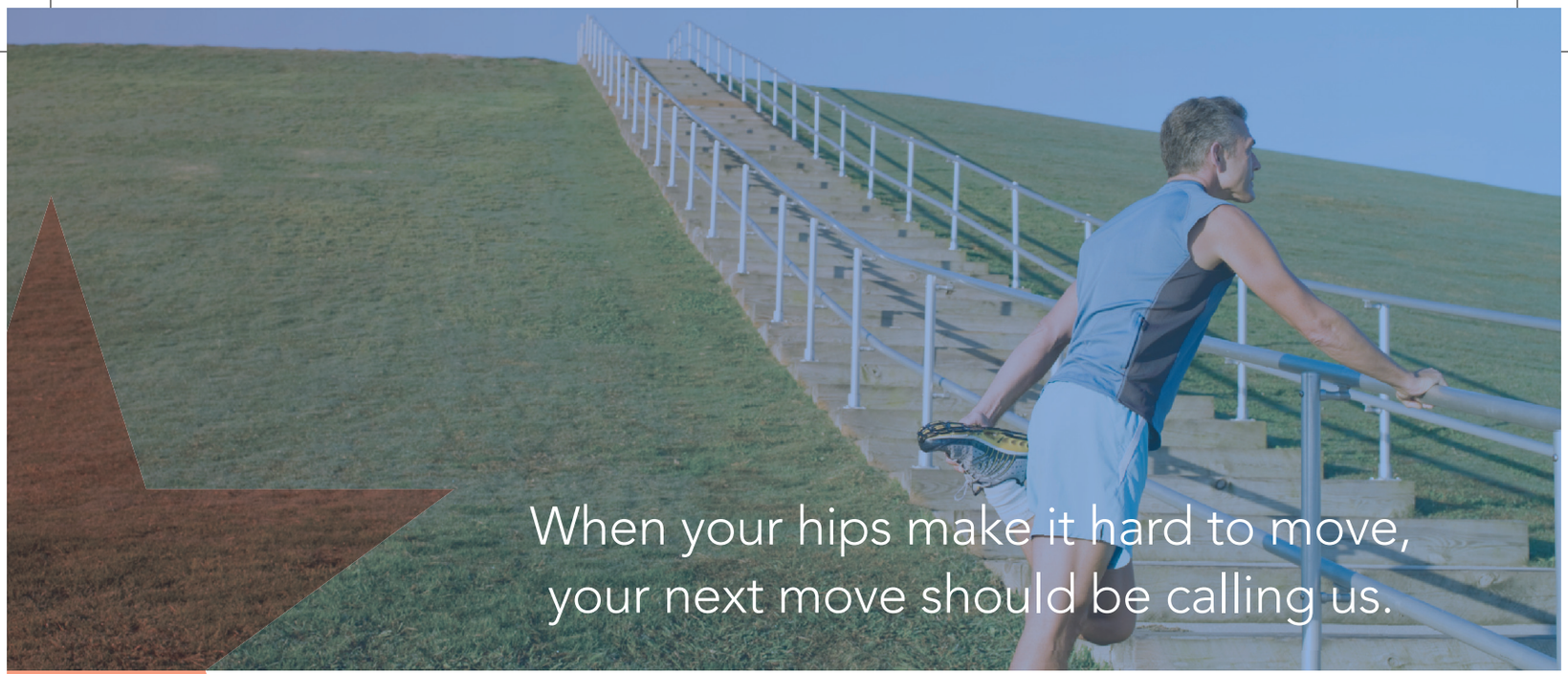
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waiting for our food. We are roused by the arrival of our quesadillas and nacatamales, which we savor.

Our afternoon is spent in a quest for souvenirs. While boutiques ring Granada's plaza, selling jewelry, clothing and handicrafts, our family heads a couple of blocks south to the town market. A crowded jumble of stalls lines the streets leading to the market building, selling everything from shoes to watches to bicycle parts. Music blasts from the stalls, while artistic displays of bananas, onions and peppers draw our attention. Sierra spots a vendor selling the traca-tracas that are so popular in the plaza and, with our help, negotiates a volume discount.

On the way back to the Managua airport, we stop in Masaya, the City of Flowers. Located 11 miles northwest of Granada, Masaya is known for producing the country's best handicrafts. After lounging in hammocks at the Isleta restaurant, we decided we needed a hammock for home, so we visit the hammock section of the crafts market and are presented with numerous options: There are chair hammocks, long hammocks, short hammocks and even hammocks for infants—in every color imaginable. We opt for a blue one that, after purchase, is professionally wrapped to check as luggage.

It's while swinging in that hammock at home that I can best recapture the feeling of our trip. As I start to awaken from a nap, in that stage between sleep and alertness, I think back on our travels through the magical country and wonder if, in fact, it was all a dream. ▲

Becky Youman writes from Scottsdale, Arizona.

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Alaska Airlines Magazine and *Horizon Edition Magazine*

2012 PHOTO CONTEST

Give us your best shot.

Alaska Airlines Magazine and *Horizon Edition Magazine* are now accepting entries for our 2012 Photo Contest, and we invite you to give us your best shots. Whether you are an amateur or professional photographer, you may submit up to three images. Entries may include natural scenics, urban landscapes, wildlife shots or human-interest photos. In addition to awarding prizes for the top three photographs, the magazines will publish the top 10 finalists in our May 2012 issues.

Entries must be postmarked by February 15, 2012.

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RULES: Submissions—**limited to three images**—should be duplicates of 35mm slides or other color transparencies; or 4x6 or 5x7 prints from film negatives · Digital photographs must be submitted as prints · Digital manipulation that changes the content or meaning of a photograph is not allowed · Minor adjustments to brightness and color are acceptable · **ENTRIES WILL NOT BE RETURNED** · Photos must have been shot within, or near, the cities and regions served by Alaska Airlines · Photos that have been previously published, accepted for publication, or are under consideration by other publications are not eligible · Photos must have been taken on or after January 1, 2011 · Print the photographer's name, address, phone number, and location of the photo on the back of each print or slide mount · Finalists may be asked to submit original materials for publication; these originals will be returned · Photographers retain all rights to their photographs · *Alaska Airlines/Horizon Edition* magazines reserve one-time rights to publication of winning photos, as well as rights to reprint and use photos in the magazines and on the websites of Paradigm Communications Group and/or Alaska Air Group for editorial and promotional purposes · Entrants agree that Paradigm Communications Group has the right to publish photo entries without compensation · All prize-award travel must be booked prior to December 31, 2012, and travel completed by April 30, 2013. Restrictions and blackout dates may apply to prize-award travel · Employees of Paradigm Communications Group, Alaska Airlines, Horizon Air and their agencies or immediate families are not eligible to participate.

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E-mail _____

Subject, location, date 1) _____

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Signature_____

By signing this entry I agree to the rules of the contest.

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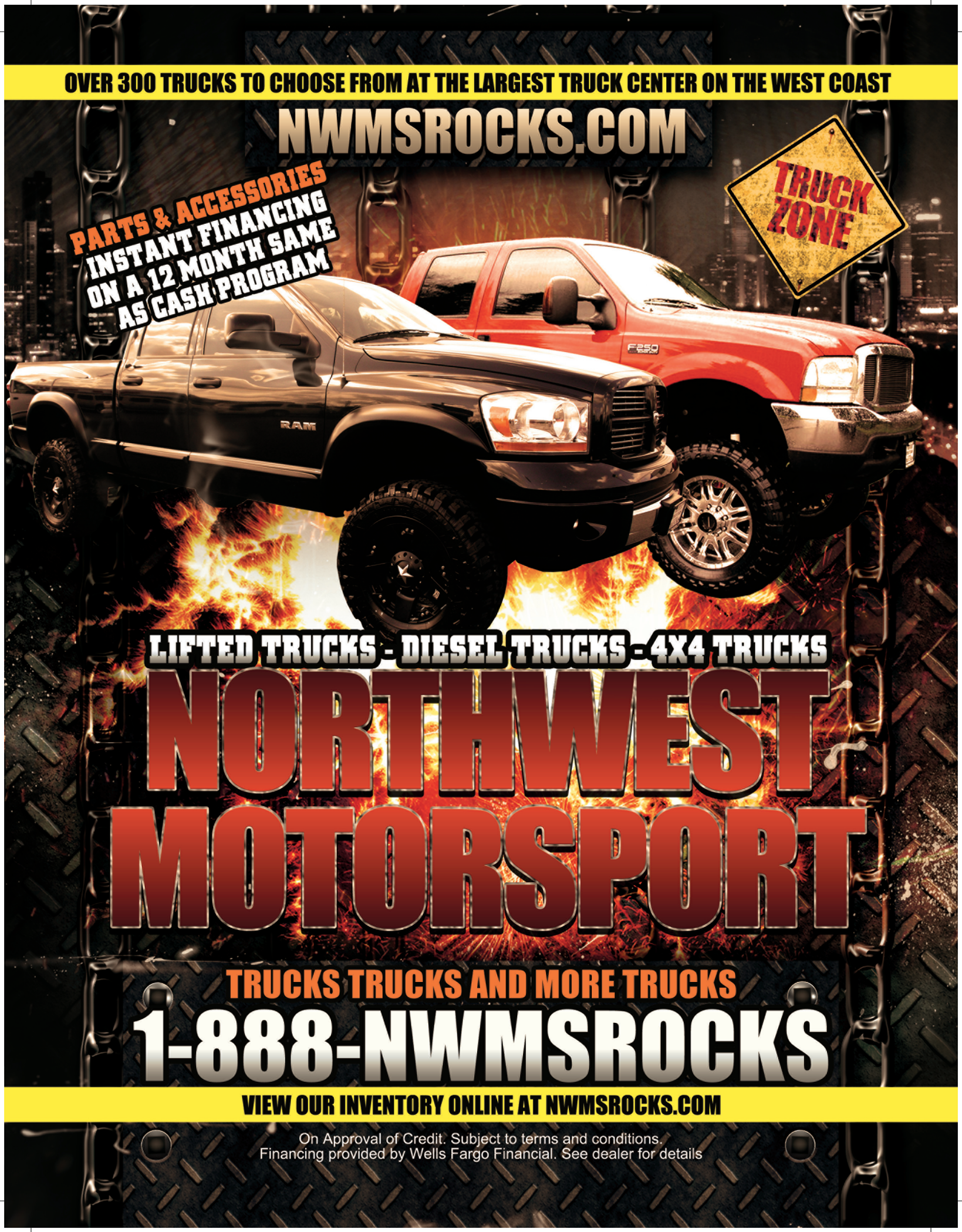
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2012 Hyundai Veloster.

Sports Coupe Attitude

By Bengt Halvorson

If you want to get a glimpse of what young, urban professionals in their 20s and 30s are looking for in a new car, take a look at the 2012 Hyundai Veloster—especially from above, with the doors open. ■ From that angle, there's a lot to take in. A single, long door on the driver's side looks like that of a true sports coupe, but on the passenger side, a standard-length front door, plus a shortened back door, are obvious bows to practicality. A relatively short, Mini Cooper-like hood and short windshield rise sharply to a smooth rooftop that is continuous glass from just behind the windshield all the way back to the hatch. The back end features carved-out taillights, flared fenders and a blacked-out panel below the bumper with roadster-style central exhausts. Black trim along the side, on the front pillars, and on the roof itself help accent the downward slope of the roofline from front to back.

The Veloster is a bit complex and a little on the daring side, but not over the top. Automotive-design analysts say younger car shoppers want a flamboyant design, but also one that feels refined and isn't too impractical or immature. They want a sports car—or at least, some of the look of a sports car—yet they want to be able to carry their friends, and their stuff, without having to make too many excuses about limited space.

Younger shoppers are also among the least willing to forgo convenience and connectivity features inside their cars.

And this discerning group of buyers is concerned about budget. In today's new-vehicle market, where the average price of a new car approaches $30,000, asking $25K might be stretching the price too far.

With the Veloster, which starts at $17,300, Hyundai has delivered one of the most interesting and appealing new designs of the year. It's been termed a Swiss Army Coupe by some, for its compact versatility. The Veloster can be responsive and nimble in the city; stable and quiet out on the highway; tech-savvy enough for mobile-office types and demanding audiophiles; roomy enough to carry the occasional couple of extra friends; and a convincing sports coupe out on mountain curves. The Veloster also carries an EPA highway rating of 40 mpg.

The production version of the Veloster is remarkably true to the concept car first shown at the 2007 Seoul and Frankfurt auto shows. The name is a construction of the words "velocity" and "roadster"—not the dinosaur velociraptor—and Veloster was aimed from the very start at hip, 20-something buyers. Brandon Ramirez, Hyundai Motor America's product planning manager, says the automaker held focus groups with young potential buyers as the vehicle was transitioned from concept car to production model. Based on focus-group input, Hyundai opted for a conventional front-hinged back door on the passenger side, instead of a so-called rear-hinged door setup (like French doors)—a design that's been used recently on cars such as the Honda Element and Saturn Ion—because it assured a tighter, more refined structure, and it didn't require the doors to be closed in a specific order. The small door is about the size of the backseat—small, but larger than that of a typical sports coupe—and the backseat is roomy enough to carry adult passengers comfortably for short trips around town.

The Veloster was designed in South Korea, but its interior is fitted with design cues and themes from the company's American design center. Those elements include the Veloster's V-shaped instrument-panel center stack contoured to look like a motorcycle fuel tank, a center console inspired by motorcycle saddles, and air vents modeled after sportbike exhaust tips.

Supporting that image is a palette of look-at-me colors, including Electrolyte Green, 26.2 Yellow, Vitamin C and Boston Red—the sort of colors you might find in an American fashion apparel catalog.

Even though the Veloster is designed to

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be an affordable small car, it packs a thoroughly modern, fuel-efficient powertrain that, for the most part, fits its fun-to-drive purpose. Its 138-horsepower, 1.6-liter four-cylinder engine has an all-aluminum design and includes direct injection as well as variable valve control. A precise six-speed manual gearbox is included, but you can also choose a six-speed EcoShift dual-clutch transmission. This all-new transmission consists of two small manual gearboxes, each connected by a separate clutch, with the whole arrangement governed by a sophisticated set of electronic controls that allows extremely quick shifts and a more vivid driving feel, without the loss in efficiency you can get with a conventional automatic transmission. It lets you quickly click through the gears in manual mode or with steering-wheel-mounted paddle shifters, or you can simply leave the transmission in "D," and it'll behave much like a normal automatic.

The Veloster is no exotic sports car, so its cost-conscious underpinnings are mostly borrowed from the unpretentious but well-rounded Elantra sedan. But the Veloster is not simply a super-stylish body fitted to an economy-car platform. Hyundai looked to its U.S. engineering team to design a different V-torsion-beam rear suspension for the Veloster, with a larger stabilizer bar and monotube performance shocks. Altogether, the suspension package brings a huge improvement that driving enthusiasts will quickly discern, without adversely affecting ride quality.

As such, the Veloster has two quite different driving personalities, as I found while driving a route through some of the Portland neighborhoods that are popular with the target demographic, and then on the winding roads of the Columbia River Gorge. Drive the car gently, and it feels like a smooth, refined—albeit firm-riding—small car. But take the Veloster out on roads where you can let its engine rev, and the Veloster takes on a whole different personality. On the open roads, the Veloster felt remarkably responsive and balanced for a front-wheel-drive sports coupe, shifting its weight around with an even, predictable attitude. It might not be a true sports car,

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but it's genuinely a sporty drive.

One of the keys to the Veloster's excellent gas mileage and its light, nimble driving feel is its weight. Hyundai notes that, thanks to the use of high-strength steel, the car weighs less than 2,600 pounds in base form—that's lighter than competitors such as the Scion tC and Honda CR-Z, and nearly as light as a base Mini Cooper.

The Veloster is also at the leading edge in another respect: connectivity. Even in its standard guise, it comes close to rivaling (or exceeding) the features you'll find in high-end luxury cars costing several times as much. All trims—even the base model—include a 7-inch touchscreen system, with a built-in Bluetooth hands-free interface, Bluetooth audio streaming (to wirelessly play from smartphones or audio players), and compatibility with Pandora Internet radio. If you're playing tracks from any source, the integrated Gracenote music-database technology will display album art and track information. And to make it even more useful, voice-recognition controls apply to devices you've connected with Bluetooth or USB, and they fully take advantage of Gracenote tags—which even include common nicknames for artists. So, for instance, you can say, "Play the Boss," and if you have Bruce Springsteen, it starts playing.

The Pandora connectivity in the Veloster is especially well-integrated. It uses the data connection from your smartphone (one with the Pandora app), and can play with sound quality comparable to that of satellite radio, which is also available. Through voice prompts or via the touchscreen, you are able to choose from among the list of "stations" you've already added to your account (by genre or artist, for instance), and just as within the phone apps, or on your computer, you can easily give individual tracks a thumbs-up or thumbs-down to help refine your profile.

You can configure the screen system to display your own images as a screensaver, and there are RCA-style video-input jacks (as well as a 115-volt power outlet) to allow full-on gaming, or to accept the video-out cable/adapter from an iPhone or other portable media player—capabilities designed for use when the car is parked.

The Veloster is one of the first vehicles to offer Hyundai's new Blue Link platform. Like GM's OnStar, Blue Link helps with emergency notification or roadside assistance; features such as turn-by-turn directions are offered on higher subscription levels. The optional navigation system comes with a rearview camera system and backup warning sensors—especially useful if you have passengers in the backseat.

Later in the year, Hyundai expects to roll out a Veloster Turbo version, which will perform more like a true sports coupe, with only a minor sacrifice in gas mileage.

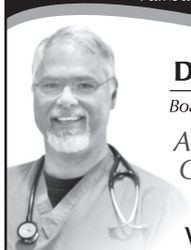
Given the Veloster's success in hitting all the marks for discerning young car shoppers, the added performance will only add greater incentive for those buyers. ▲

Bengt Halvorson is a freelance automotive journalist living in Portland.

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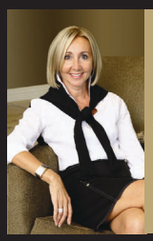
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FROM PAGE 45 better known for nondesert terrain are in fact largely desertified. For example, Oregon.

"On a map of Oregon, measure the vast arid area east of the Cascades, and you will understand that this is a desert state every bit as much—if not more than—a forest state," says Brent Fenty, executive director of the Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) in Bend, a preservation advocacy group. "Look around out here, and you'll realize there's just so much life in a place many perceive as barren."

In fact, the western deserts' many plant and animal denizens find it not a wasteland but a place to thrive, and they create amazing strategies for surviving their home's challenges.

- The foothill palo verde of the northern Sonoran Desert, faced with extended drought, actually sheds branches to mitigate drought stress. More drought, more branch shedding.
- The famous Mojave desert tortoise spends as much as 85 percent of its life in underground burrows that provide shelter from both scorching heat and freezing cold. It can store water in a special bladder that amounts to a third of its body weight.
- The Great Basin Desert's Lahontan cutthroat trout can survive high water temperatures and alkalinity severe enough to kill other trout—and thrive in streams that sometimes dry up in late summer.

I HAVE CAUGHT LAHONTAN CUTTHROATS IN A southeastern Oregon desert stream that was dry a year before—and a year later. I cast a fly in a prairie breeze, eagles calling overhead, and set the fly when the trout flashed out from a deep undercut bank. Then I rested my pole in a patch of late-June wild iris as I gently returned the fish to the water. Far above, on a mountain flank, glistened the last banks of winter snow whose meltwater filled this stream.

The Great Basin Desert lies in what's known as "basin and range" topography, and the gifts of the mountains above are the freshets running below, one of the signature features of the Great Basin. Though at streamside there was a 6-foot-wide riparian zone, beyond that began 50

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miles of sagebrush "sea" that ran unbroken to the next mountain eastward.

This is pretty close to heaven, in my opinion, and leads us to another unique group, the human beings who treasure these desert environments. Their backgrounds are incredibly diverse, but they are all attracted to the Western desert for what Brent Fenty describes as the "sense of solitude you just can't get anywhere else."

That's also what drew one of Fenty's fellow Bend residents, David Eddleston, to the area. Raised in Kenya, a British Army veteran who spent years in and near Africa's famous Serengeti plain, Eddleston retired to Bend, joined ONDA and has devoted countless hours to volunteer projects helping to preserve the high desert.

Among other things, as a volunteer for ONDA, he helped create a new Bureau of Land Management preserve, the Oregon Badlands Wilderness just east of Bend. And he has joined dozens of other volunteers (including me) in removing hundreds of miles of abandoned barbed wire fence from the Hart Mountain refuge so pronghorn antelope may once more run free across the sage desert.

"When I'm out there I think back to the Serengeti, and then I picture in my mind a thousand antelope racing across the range at Hart Mountain. Just like the gazelles in the Serengeti," Eddleston says. "I may never live to see that, but I hope my grandchildren will."

Eddleston and I have pulled posts and baled wire across miles of the Great Basin Desert, not just for our grandchildren, but for the moment itself, savoring the immeasurable freedom and clean air, beautiful light and irreplaceable serenity that characterize deserts across the West. ▲

Eric Lucas lives in Seattle.

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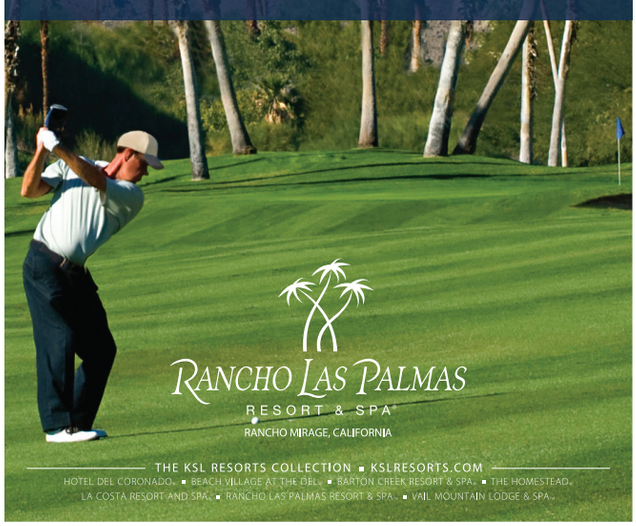


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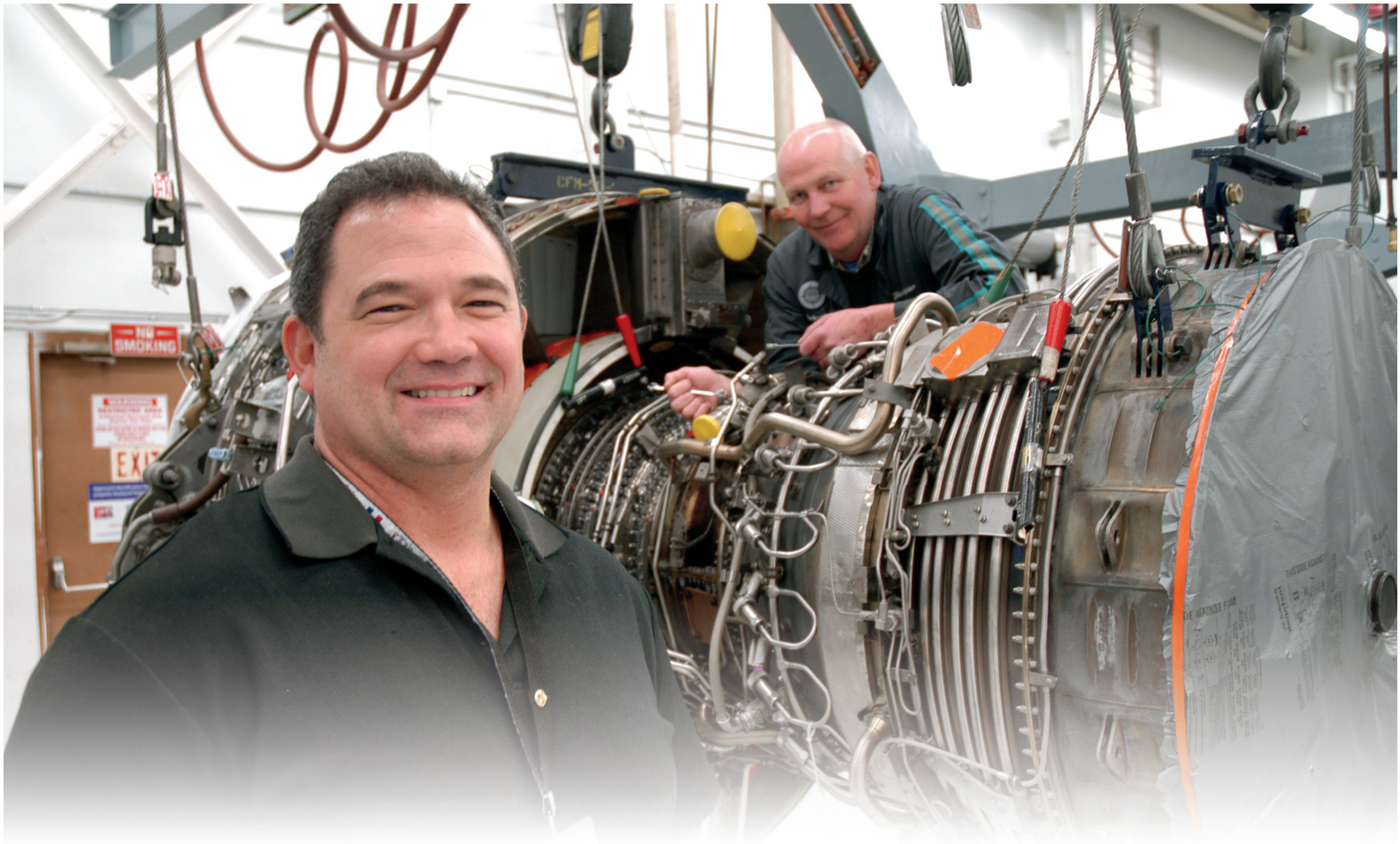
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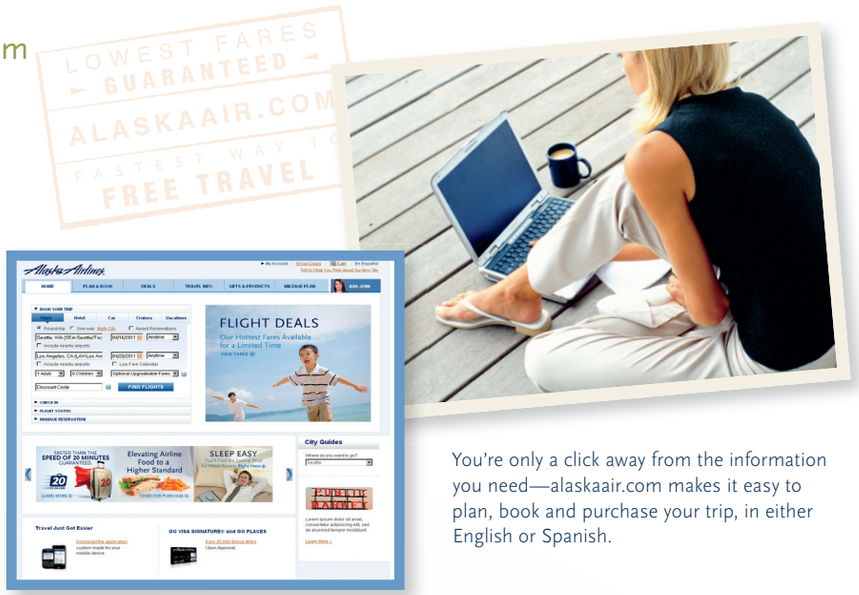
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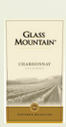
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Kona Longboard Island Lager**
Bacardi Rum
Jose Cuervo Tequila
The Glenlivet
Sobieski Vodka
Jack Daniel's Black Label
Seagram's Crown Royal
Bailey's Irish Cream
Courvoisier Cognac
Tanqueray Gin



Complimentary

Coca Cola, Coke Zero, Diet Coke
Sprite, Sprite Zero
Ginger Ale
Barq's Root Beer
Tonic Water and Club Soda
Athena® Bottled Water
Juices: Orange, Tomato, Cranberry, Apple, Pineapple** and our special blend of Passion, Orange and Guava juices**
Bloody Mary Mix
Tea
Proudly serving Starbucks® coffee

** On flights to/from Mexico*
*** On flights to/from Hawai'i*

ONBOARD RECYCLING

Please join our effort to reduce our environmental footprint by separating recyclable paper, cardboard, plastic, glass and aluminum, and passing these items to flight attendants for recycling in participating locations. Thank you.

ALASKA AIRLINES/HORIZON AIR GREEN TEAM

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Inflight Entertainment



PUT HOLLYWOOD IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Enjoy our portable inflight entertainment system, including over 75 movies, plenty of TV shows, sports, music, discounted Internet access and more.

BLOCKBUSTER HITS



Happy Feet 2 (PG; 1:39) Enjoy the world's most famous tap-dancing penguin, Mumble, the love of his life, Gloria, and their old friends Ramon and Lovelace. Mumble and Gloria now have a son who is struggling to find his own talents in the Emperor Penguin world.



The Big Year (PG; 1:38; available in English subtitles) As bird watchers square off in a competition to spot and record the highest number of species, three in particular find themselves sacrificing their personal relationships to be the "top birder" of the year.



What's Your Number (R–edited; 1:42) Ally panics after reading a magazine article suggesting she might have missed Mr. Right because of all her ex-boyfriends. Her hunky new neighbor helps Ally track down her exes, while she helps him escape his!



In Time (PG13; 1:48; available in English subtitles) In a world where time is money, the wealthy live forever while the poor, like the rebellious Will Salas, have to beg, borrow and steal enough minutes to make it through each day. Will tries to bring down the system as his clock ticks down to zero.



Dolphin Tale (PG; 1:53) A tale about Winter, a young dolphin who loses her tail in a crab trap and Sawyer, the introverted 11-year-old boy who befriends her and rallies friends and family alike to help her swim.

MORE THAN 70 POPULAR MOVIES

- All-Time Favorites
- Oldies But Goodies
- Kids Only!

TV SHOWS

- Dexter
- CSI
- 24
- The Big Bang Theory
- The Good Wife
- The Simpsons
- Futurama
- X-Files
- 2 Broke Girls
- Harry's Law
- Rizzoli & Isles
- Family Guy
- The World's Best Commercials
- Good Time Golf
- The Artist Toolbox
- Next Stop Travel Show
- Hollywood's Top 10: Giant Giants
- Hollywood's Top 10: Gadgets & Gizmos
- Game On! with John Salley
- Special: Movies A La Carte

MORE

- Music
- Music Videos
- Cartoons
- Health
- Discover Hawai'i
- Discover Alaska
- KJR Sports Talk
- Internet Access ($7.95)

PRICING

- Flights scheduled 4.5 hours or longer $14 onboard
- Flights scheduled 3.5–4.5 hours long $8 onboard
- Reserve at alaskaair.com and save $2
- Complimentary—First Class on flights scheduled 3.5 hours or longer

INFLIGHT WI-FI

Look for this decal as you board your aircraft to see if your flight is Wi-Fi–equipped.

Gogo® Inflight Internet is available on nearly all Alaska Airlines 737 aircraft, including all aircraft flying transcontinental routes. Only nine of the airline's 117 Boeing 737s do not offer Wi-Fi—its Freighter and Combi (part-passenger/part-freight) aircraft and three 737-400s. With Gogo, you can surf the Web, check email, and access your Virtual Private Network (VPN), all with your own Wi-Fi–enabled device. Please refer to the card in the seatback pocket for pricing and availability information and sign-up instructions. Flight attendants will indicate when it is safe to activate electronic devices and access Gogo.

Atlas A5 02.12 v1.indd 149 1/16/12 5:35:51 PM

U.S., Hawai‘i and Mexico

Alaska Airlines is proud to serve more than 90 locations throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. We serve many other cities with our codeshare partners, American Airlines, American Eagle, Delta Air Lines and Delta Connection.

On routes that require a connection to one of our partners, we strive to ensure a smooth transition, which includes the ease of purchasing your ticket with just one call or a visit to alaskaair.com, taking care of your bag transfer, and providing assistance at any stage of your journey should you have questions.

What’s more, all our codeshare partners are also Mileage Plan partners, allowing generous opportunities to earn Bonus Miles. And with reciprocal elite-status benefits, enjoy several enhancements to your journey. Learn more at alaskaair.com.

Legend

Routes served by:

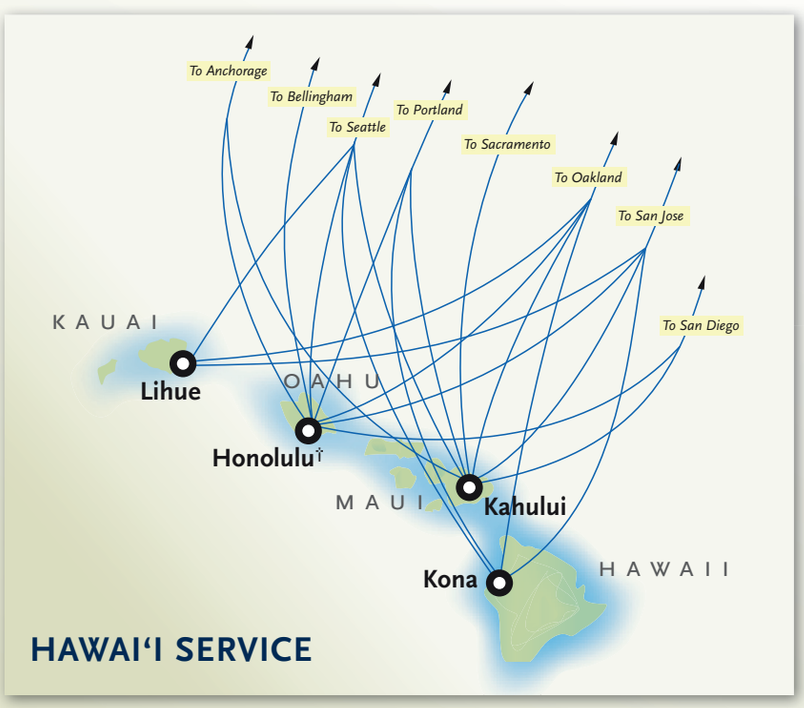
— Alaska Airlines

— AmericanAirlines*

— DELTA

Some Alaska Airlines service operated by Horizon Air or SkyWest Airlines.

** Some routes shown operated seasonally.*





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U.S. Mileage

Between	Mileage
Seattle &	
Boston	2496
Denver	1024
Honolulu	2677
Los Angeles (LAX)	954
Miami	2724
New York City/Newark	2401
Phoenix	1106
San Diego	1050
San Francisco	678
Washington, D.C.	2306

Between	Mileage
Portland &	
Los Angeles (LAX)	834
Phoenix	1009
San Diego	933
San Francisco	550

Mileage Plan members receive mileage credit (500 miles minimum) based on the nonstop mileage between the origin and destination indicated on the ticket. For more information on the Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan, see page A2.

UPCOMING NEW SERVICE†

Route	Service Begins
San Jose–Palm Springs	February 17, 2012
Kansas City–Seattle	March 12, 2012
Honolulu–San Jose	April 10, 2012
Honolulu–Oakland	April 10, 2012
Portland–Bellingham	June 4, 2012
Portland–Bozeman	June 4, 2012
Portland–Santa Barbara	June 4, 2012
San Diego–Fresno	June 4, 2012
San Diego–Monterey	June 4, 2012
San Diego–Santa Rosa	June 4, 2012
San Jose–Reno	June 4, 2012

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Alaska



Alaska Mileage

Between	Mileage
Fairbanks &	
Barrow	503
Seattle	1533
Chicago	2785
Anchorage &	
Cordova	160
Kodiak	252
Fairbanks	261
King Salmon	289
Dillingham	329
Bethel	399
Nome	539
Kotzebue	549
Juneau	571
Prudhoe Bay	627
Ketchikan	776
Dutch Harbor	792
Seattle	1448
Portland	1542
San Francisco	2045
Los Angeles	2375
Honolulu	2776
Chicago	2847
Juneau &	
Sitka	95
Petersburg	123
Yakutat	199
Ketchikan	235
Seattle	909
Ketchikan &	
Wrangell	83
Sitka	185
Juneau	235
Seattle	679

Mileage Plan members receive mileage credit (500 miles minimum) based on the nonstop mileage between the origin and destination indicated on the ticket. For more information on the Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan, see page A2.

Alaska Airlines Cities

* Some routes shown operate seasonally.
† Dutch Harbor–Anchorage service operated by PenAir.

Airline Partners

Make easy connections throughout Alaska with our partnership airlines.

Era Alaska

PenAir

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The place we call home

Regional highlight

Fairbanks is the Golden Heart of Alaska's Interior

Fairbanks is a city of light, warmth and energy. In the summer, sunlight flows from one day to the next, fading ever so slightly over broad taiga forests and distant peaks. Through winter months, the red, green and purple of the aurora borealis dance over lands hushed by snow.

Visitors will find warmth in the hospitality of locals who revel in the many activities of Alaska's Interior—hiking and fishing, skiing and snow-machining. In summer, residents are still golfing, bike riding and gardening while most of the U.S. population has already gone to bed. In the winter, they're as active as ever, skiing, dog-sledding or simply enjoying a rejuvenating soak at a local hot spring.

Alaska's second largest city began with a 1902 gold strike that brought a rush of prospectors to the banks of the Chena River, a tributary to the long, navigable Yukon River system. Fairbanks soon became a strategic trading post for prospectors, fur trappers and adventurers.

Fairbanks has similarly prospered with the energy industry as a critical hub for the development of the North Slope oil fields and the construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline.

Today, Fairbanks' vibrant downtown is rich with restaurants, shops and galleries, complemented by a range of museums, performing arts, spectator sports and the community benefits of a top-notch university.

Nearby, visitors will find some of the grandest wilderness in the state, including The Great One—Denali, North America's highest peak—and the adjoining 6 million-acre Denali National Park and Preserve, abundant with moose, caribou, Dall sheep, wolves and bears.

Fairbanks Facts



Population: 97,600 in the greater Fairbanks area.

Gold: 32 percent of all gold mined in Alaska is from within 25 miles of Fairbanks.

Auroa borealis: Chance of seeing northern lights during a three-night stay, August to April: 90 percent.

Baseball: First pitch for June 21 Midnight Sun Baseball Game: 10:30 p.m.

Military: Facilities located nearby include Fort Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base.

Ice: Host to the World Ice Art Championships.



The Fairbanks arts scene is in its element in winter with the annual World Ice Art Championships—February 28 to March 25, 2012—attracting more than 100 ice artists.

With such year-round diversity, exploring Fairbanks really requires at least two visits.

Above: The aurora borealis, or northern lights, shimmer over Alaska's Interior. PHOTO: TOMJI/AURORA BOREALIS LODGE, FAIRBANKS CVB.

Below: A young girl enjoys an ice sculpture in Fairbanks. PHOTO: ROBIN HOOD/ATIA.

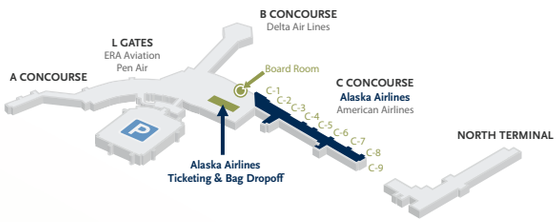


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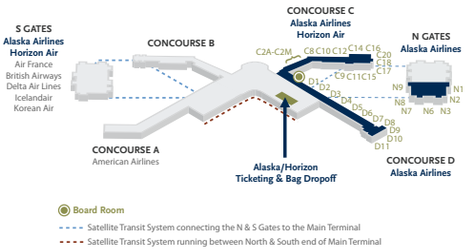
Helping you find your way

A quick guide to help you make easier connections.

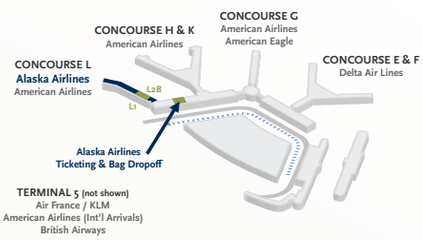
Anchorage International Airport (ANC)



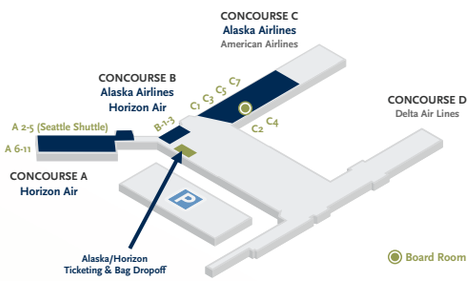
Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (SEA)



Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD)



Portland International Airport (PDX)



Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)



*Connect to American Airlines (Terminal 4) and American Eagle (satellite terminal) via shuttle bus at Gate 39.
Connect to Delta Air Lines (Terminal 5) via shuttle bus at Gate 39.
**Delta Air Lines and Alaska Airlines flights operated by Delta operate from Terminal 5.
Passengers arriving at Terminal 3 and connecting to Delta should take the shuttle bus at Gate 39 to Terminal 5.

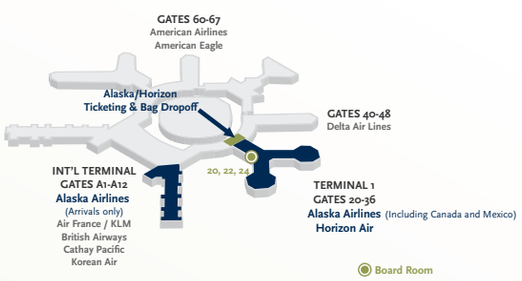
Helpful tips upon landing at LAX from Mexico:

- If necessary, clear all checked baggage through U.S. Customs.
- After clearing Customs, pack all duty free liquids securely in your checked baggage to avoid confiscation by the TSA. Then recheck your luggage with an Alaska Airlines Customer Service Agent at the baggage recheck area of the International Terminal.
- Proceed out of the building and go directly to the curbside.
- Turn left and take the UP escalator to the departure level.
- Continue in the same direction along the curbside to the departure level of Terminal 3 directly in front of you.
- Enter Terminal 3 at the Alaska Airlines ticket counter area and take the escalator up to the departure Gates 30 through 39.
- Average time from landing to Gate 30 is 60 minutes

Datos de ayuda a su llegada de México a Los Angeles:

- De ser necesario, pase por aduana de los EEUU con su equipaje documentado.
- Después de pasar aduana, empaque seguramente todos los líquidos que adquirió en la tienda libre de impuestos (duty-free) en su equipaje documentado para evitar ser confiscados por Seguridad (TSA). Después entregue su equipaje al agente de Alaska Airlines en el area para documentación de equipaje.
- Proceda afuera del edificio directamente hacia la acera.
- A su izquierda tome la escalera eléctrica al siguiente nivel.
- Continúe en la misma dirección por la acera hacia la Terminal 3 de salidas domésticas, justofrente a Usted.
- Al entrar a la Terminal 3, junto a los mostradores de Alaska Airlines, tome la escalera eléctrica que lo llevará a las salas 30 a la 39.
- El tiempo estimado para el recorrido hacia la sala 30 desde que usted aterriza, es de 60 minutos.

San Francisco International Airport (SFO)



Helpful tips upon landing at SFO from Mexico:

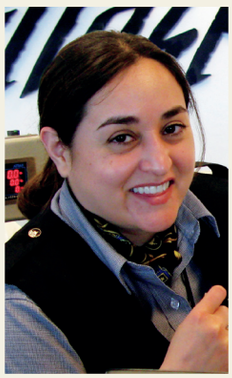
- If necessary, clear all checked baggage through U.S. Customs.
- After clearing Customs, exit to the right through sliding glass doors.
- Pack all duty-free liquids securely in your checked baggage to avoid confiscation by the TSA. Then recheck your baggage with an Alaska Airlines Customer Service Agent at the baggage recheck point in the San Francisco International Terminal.
- Proceed directly down the hall and turn left to the connecting hallways leading to Domestic Terminal 1.
- Continue in the same direction and turn right at the signs for Gates 20–36 —Alaska Airlines uses Gates 20, 22 and 24.
- Average time from landing to Gate 20 is 40 minutes.

Datos de ayuda a su llegada de México a San Francisco:

- De ser necesario, pase por aduana de los EEUU con su equipaje que documentó.
- Después de pasar aduana, prosiga por la puerta de vidrio corrediza y a su su derecha.
- Empaque seguramente todos los líquidos que adquirió en la tienda libre de impuestos (duty-free) en su equipaje documentado, para evitar ser confiscados por Seguridad (TSA). Después entregue su equipaje al agente de Alaska Airlines en los mostradores, justo afuera de aduana en la Terminal Internacional.
- Proceda directamente al fondo del pasillo y de vuelta a la izquierda hacia los pasillos de conexiones de la Terminal Doméstica 1.
- Deberá llegar hasta donde se encuentran las indicaciones para las salas 20 a la 36. De vuelta a la derecha y deberá pasar por seguridad. Alaska Airlines usa las salas 20, 22 y 24.
- El tiempo estimado para el recorrido hacia la sala 20 desde que usted aterriza, es de 40 minutos.

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Hablamos Español



Above Loren, Customer Service Agent, Anchorage

AT YOUR SERVICE

Alaska Airlines is proud to be the largest foreign flag carrier serving Mexico. As such, we are committed to delivering on our promise to provide our valued Spanish-speaking customers with an exceptional experience that is safe, dependable and delivered with genuine and caring service. To serve you better, our products and services are available in Spanish through the following:

- Reservations and Customer Care call centers
- Kiosk check-in at the airport
- alaskaair.com / español
- CEO monthly editorial in this magazine
- Connecting gate information on page A10
- Customs and immigration forms information on page A12

Also, at the airport or once onboard, Spanish-speaking employees are happy to assist you. Just look for smiling, friendly employees wearing our unique "A su servicio" name tags.





A SU SERVICIO

Alaska Airlines tiene el orgullo de ser la compañía de bandera extranjera más grande que presta servicios con destino a México. Por eso, hemos asumido el compromiso de cumplir nuestra promesa de proporcionar a nuestros apreciados clientes hispanohablantes una experiencia excepcional que, a la vez, sea segura, confiable y llegue a ellos con un servicio genuino y atento. Para atenderle mejor, nuestros productos y servicios se encuentran disponibles en español a través de:

- Centros de atención telefónica de Reservaciones y de Atención al Cliente
- Quioscos de registro del aeropuerto
- alaskaair.com/español
- El editorial mensual del director ejecutivo se encuentra al inicio de esta revista
- Información sobre las salas de conexión en la página A10
- Información sobre formularios aduaneros e inmigratorios en la página A12

Asimismo, en el aeropuerto o una vez a bordo, nuestros empleados hispanohablantes con gusto le brindarán ayuda. Simplemente diríjase a nuestros empleados sonrientes y cordiales que llevan nuestras exclusivas identificaciones con la leyenda "A su servicio".

Better together

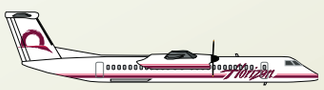
ALASKA AIRLINES AND HORIZON AIR

As sister carriers in Alaska Air Group, Alaska Airlines and Horizon Air are dedicated to bringing you the highest possible level of service. Together, we serve more than 90 cities throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. To make your travel simple and seamless, you get one ticket, one low fare and one easy check-in that includes seat assignments on both airlines.



Above The new Q400 livery prominently features the Alaska Airlines brand while retaining the valued Horizon name.

Horizon's Fleet



Bombardier Q400

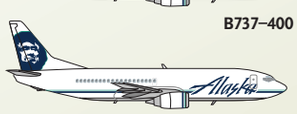
Alaska's Fleet



B737–700



B737–400



B737–400C



B737–400F



B737–800



B737–900

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Customs and Immigration

Customs and Immigration forms are distributed by flight attendants during your flight. Prior to landing, complete all forms that pertain to you, following the tips below. Completed forms are presented immediately upon entering the International Arrivals building.

Las formas de Aduana y Migración son distribuidas por los sobrecargos durante el vuelo. Antes del aterrizaje en su destino final complete las formas correspondientes usando las indicaciones que se porporcionan a continuación. Las formas completas seran presentadas en la Terminal Internacional.

To the United States

U.S. Customs Declaration



Who must complete this form?
All travelers

Helpful tips
- One form per person or one per family with same address
- Lines 5, 6—If not using a passport, leave these lines blank
- Line 9—Enter "AS" for Alaska Airlines
- Sign at the "X"

Declaracion de Aduana

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?
Todos los pasajeros

Datos de ayuda
- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Línea 5, 6—Si no tiene pasaporte, deje esta sección en blanco
- Línea 9—Use "AS" para Alaska Airlines
- Firme en la "X"

I-94 Arrival/Departure Record (white)



Who must complete this form?
All travelers who are using a Visa to enter the U.S.

Helpful tips
- One form per person
- Complete both Arrival and Departure portions
- Do not write on the back
- Keep the lower portion with your passport in order to exit U.S.

I-94 Registro de Llegada/Salida (blanca)

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?
Todos los pasajeros que usen Visa de turista para entrar a EE.UU.

Datos de ayuda
- Una forma por persona
- Complete las dos partes de la forma, Llegada y Salida
- No escriba en la parte de atrás
- Una vez sellada por migración, debe guardar la parte inferior de la forma para su salida de EE.UU.

I-94W Nonimmigrant Visa Waiver Arrival/Departure Form (green)



Who must complete this form?
All non-immigrant visitors seeking entry to the U.S. under the Visa Waiver Program.

Helpful tips
- Remember to complete the back of this form
- Keep the lower portion with your with your poassport in order to exit U.S.

I-94W Registro de Llegada/Salida Para "Visa Waiver" de No-Imigrante (verde)

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?

Todos los visitantes no-inmigrantes que deseen ingresar a los Estados Unidos a través del programa de exención de visa.

To Canada

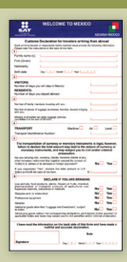


Flight Attendants distribute a combined Customs and Immigration form during your flight. Prior to landing in Canada, complete this form, which includes easy-to-follow instructions. Completed forms are presented immediately upon entering the International Arrivals building.

Los Sobrecargos distribuyen una forma combinada para aduana y migración. Antes de aterrizar en Canadá, llene esta forma que incluye instrucciones fáciles de seguir. Las formas completas serán presentadas inmediatamente al entrar al edificio de la Terminal Internacional.

To Mexico

Mexico Customs Declaration



Who must complete this form?
All travelers

Helpful tips
- One form per person or one per family with same address
- Section 6—It is not necessary to declare medicine for your personal use

Declaracion de Aduana

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?
Todos los pasajeros.

Datos de ayuda
- Una forma por persona o por familia con la misma dirección
- Sección 6—No es necesario declarar sus medicamentos de uso personal

FMM



Who must complete this form?
All travelers except citizens of Mexico

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?
Todos los viajeros, excepto los ciudadanos de México

FEM For Mexican Nationals



Who must complete this form?
Citizens of Mexico

FEM Para Mexicanos

¿Quién debe completar esta forma?
Ciudadanos de México (Aun siendo residentes permanentes de EE.UU.)

Datos de ayuda
- Pasajeros residentes en México, entregue la segunda parte de la forma FEM que lleno al salir de México
- Pasajeros residentes en EE.UU., llenar la forma FEM y guardar la parte sellada por migración para salir de México

Please use all capital letters with blue or black ink.
Por favor use letra mayúscula en tinta azul o negra.

Mexico State Codes

City / State	State Code
Guadalajara / Jalisco	JAL
Ixtapa, Zihuatanejo / Guerrero	GRO
Loreto, La Paz, Los Cabos, San Jose / Baja Calif. del Sur	BCS
Manzanillo / Colima	COL
Mazatlán / Sinaloa	SIN
Mexico City / Distrito Federal	D.F.
Nuevo Vallarta, Bucerias and north / Nayarit	NAY
Puerto Vallarta, Mismaloya / Jalisco	JAL

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A guide for air travelers

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Alaska Airlines have set the following rules and regulations to assure your safety and comfort:

- Your seat belt must be fastened whenever the "FASTEN SEAT BELT" sign is illuminated. Keep your seat belt fastened at all other times in case of undetectable clear-air turbulence.
- Seat backs and tray tables must be in the upright, locked position during taxi, takeoff and landing.
- All carry-on baggage, laptop computers and electronic devices must be stowed under a seat or in an enclosed overhead bin upon boarding and prior to landing, as directed.
- Please use caution when opening an overhead bin, as items may have shifted.
- Customers are requested to use the lavatory in their assigned cabin and are required to do so on inbound international flights; exceptions may be made for customers with special needs.
- Prior to takeoff and landing, service items provided by Alaska Airlines must be picked up or properly stowed under the seat in front of you, in carry-on luggage that is properly stowed or in an overhead bin.
- Alcohol may not be consumed aboard an aircraft unless it has been provided by a flight attendant. No alcohol may be served to any person who appears to be intoxicated, or who is under 21 years of age.
- During taxi, takeoff and landing, all portable electronic devices and headphones must be turned off. Cell phones may be used while the boarding door is open until advised by your flight attendant that they must be turned off. The boarding door cannot be closed until all electronic devices are off. Upon landing, your flight attendant will advise when cell phone use is permitted. During flight, electronic voice communications of any kind (e.g., cell/VoIP calls) are prohibited. Your flight attendant will tell you when you may use approved portable electronic devices, such as cell phones/PDAs/two-way communication devices.
- Headphones must be worn when using electronic devices such as CD players, digEplayers, etc.
- The following equipment may never be used during flight: cell phones (in transmit mode), two-way pagers, radios, televisions, remote-controlled games or toys, cordless computer mouse, or global-positioning systems.
- Interference with crew members' (including flight attendants') duties is a violation of federal law. Under federal law, no person may assault, threaten, intimidate or interfere with crew members in the performance of their duties aboard an aircraft under operation. Penalties for crew interference include fines up to $11,000, imprisonment or both. An incident report may be filed with the FAA regarding a customer's behavior.
- Smoking is not permitted on any Alaska Airlines flight.
- Child-restraint devices must bear the FAA approval sticker.
- Seat-belt extension use is not allowed in exit rows for the safety of all passengers due to the possibility of entanglement by the extensions.
- Alaska Airlines prohibits the use of items that do not meet FAA Regulations or Company regulations. This includes the use of seat-belt extensions not provided by Alaska Airlines, devices that restrict the recline of seats, self-heating meals or beverages, air filters placed on overhead vents and personal air purifying devices.
- Pets must remain in carrier for entire flight. Carrier must be stowed for taxi, takeoff and landing.

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Alaska Airlines is the first major U.S. carrier to implement a Baggage Service Guarantee. If your baggage is not at baggage claim within 20 minutes of your plane parking at the gate, you're entitled to a $20 Discount Code for use on a future Alaska Airlines or Horizon Air flight, or 2,000 Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan bonus miles. If we don't meet our 20-minute guarantee, simply see an Alaska Airlines or Horizon Air Customer Service Agent in the baggage claim area for your voucher.

- One voucher per qualified passenger, for one or more checked bags.
- Our guarantee does not apply for conditions beyond our control, such as severe weather or a malfunction in the airport's mechanical systems.



- Since additional care is needed to deliver specialty items such as pets, sports equipment, assistive devices, etc., the guarantee does not apply to these items.
- Additional international processing prevents us from offering our guarantee on flights arriving to the U.S. from Mexico.
- Full terms and conditions available at alaskaair.com.

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Carry-ons are limited to one bag, plus one personal item such as a purse or laptop computer. Each item must measure no more than 10" x 17" x 24" (51 linear inches). In order to ease the boarding process and keep everyone on schedule, place carry-on bags in overhead bins, wheels down and "facing you."

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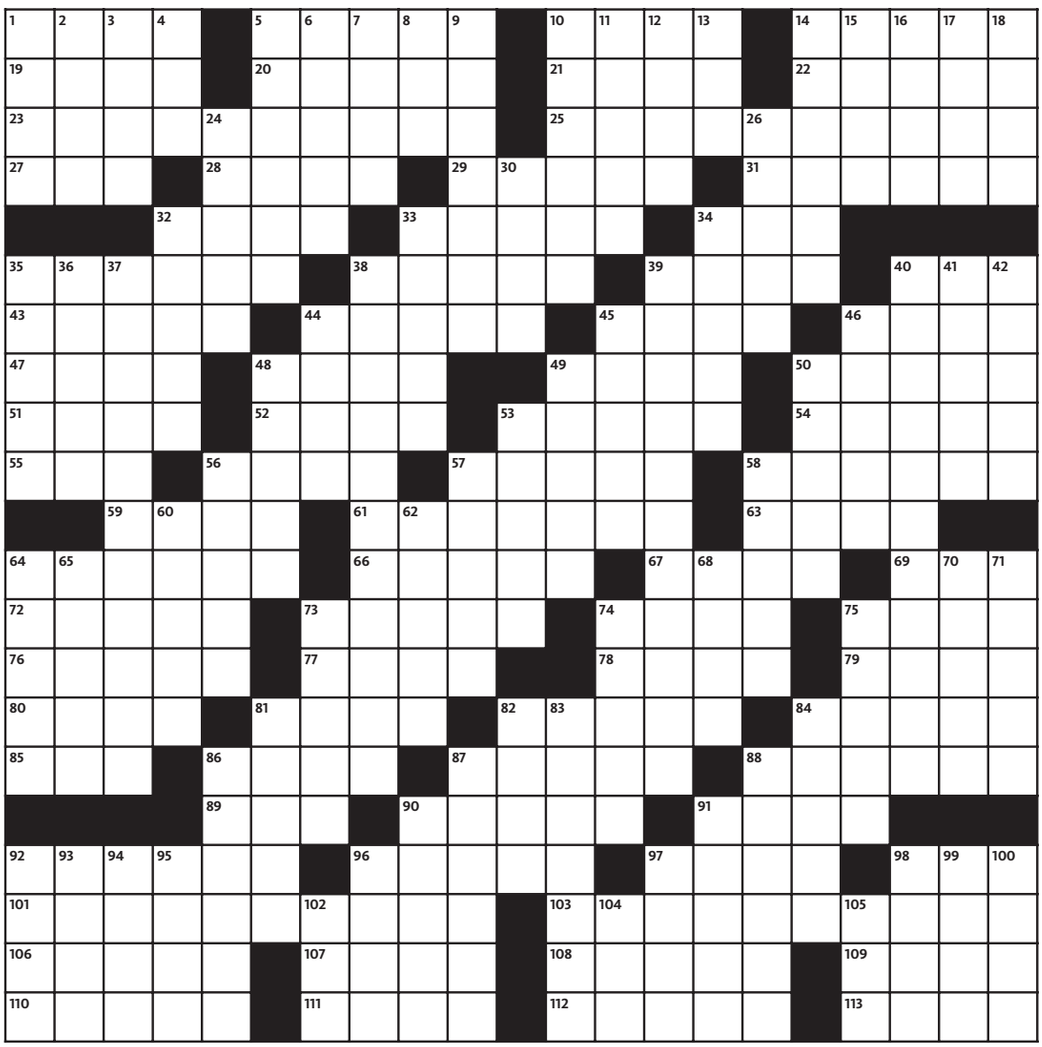
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ACROSS

1 Cookie man
5 Vise
10 ___ *Gotta Have It*
14 Group of witches
19 PBS science show
20 Stevedore
21 Mats
22 Skirt style
23 Iffy
25 Everywhere
27 Doctrine
28 Irritates
29 Cordwood measure
31 Most contemptible
32 Victim
33 Creamery
34 Graduate deg.
35 Warm again
38 Steer
39 Bright, as colors
40 Sound of surprise
43 Danger signal
44 Greek sorceress
45 Sect
46 Snorri story
47 Scot's church
48 Interlaced
49 Narrative
50 Requisition
51 Whirlpool
52 Weeder
53 Ms. Mesta
54 Cotton thread
55 Tar's milieu
56 Song syllables
57 Friendly Islands, today
58 Bring stillness, as to a ship
59 Brad, e.g.
61 1940 musical
63 Borrowed sum
64 Burden
66 Less moist
67 Raised platform
69 Name
72 Incompetent
73 Twinklers
74 Hot spot
75 Casino town
76 Animal products
77 Fence catch
78 Crucifix
79 Atop
80 Bulk
81 Small fry
82 Harbinger of spring
84 Islamic judges
85 Trickery
86 Biblical pronoun
87 Clearheaded
88 Evening occurrence
89 Bard's always
90 Capital of Morocco
91 Apron tops
92 Warsaw's country
96 Recordkeeper
97 Impulse
98 Moreover
101 Recovered
103 Intricacies
106 *The* ___ *Mutiny*
107 Pay to play
108 Dorothy, to Em
109 Forearm bone
110 Church leader
111 Doe
112 Birch's kin
113 Raise

DOWN

1 Adversary
2 Elsie's comments
3 Gamete
4 Bursa
5 Red wine
6 Gaunt
7 Says further
8 Tilly or Ryan
9 Dull
10 Ball
11 Hirsute
12 Rim
13 Quiet!
14 The Promised Land
15 Auto pioneer
16 Repulsive
17 Baseball's Slaughter
18 Semi-aquatic salamander
24 Gen. Grant's real first name
26 Monastery head
30 Current
32 Lively
33 Painter Albrecht ___
34 Free-for-all
35 Gathers leaves
36 Pass over
37 Strongly binding
38 Cooperation
39 Not valid
40 Scraps
41 Children's author Scott ___
42 Sultan's group
44 Calm
45 Freight
46 Writer Jong
48 Ahab's quest
49 Male voice
50 Butter substitutes
53 Pears, e.g.
56 Cheerful tunes
57 Nerd
58 Unseeing
60 Passages
62 Wipe away
64 ___ cum laude
65 Close, of yore
68 Astronomical time period
70 Let loose
71 Push upward
73 More timid
74 Planet's path
75 Colorful horses
81 Actress Bara
82 Bumpkin
83 Sweet potato
84 Diced
86 Soft-hearted
87 Second of two
88 Legal attestant
90 Itinerary
91 Prop up
92 Brownish purple
93 Girasol
94 Placed
95 Diarist Frank
96 Not any
97 Employed
98 ___ log
99 Alcohol lamp
100 Russian autocrat
102 Harmful
104 Zero
105 ___ *Town*

Solution on page 134.

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PHOTO PAGE



This heart sculpture, by Hilary Pecis, was displayed in Union Square as part of the 2011 Hearts in San Francisco series. It was auctioned to benefit the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation. New heart sculptures will be displayed in 2012.

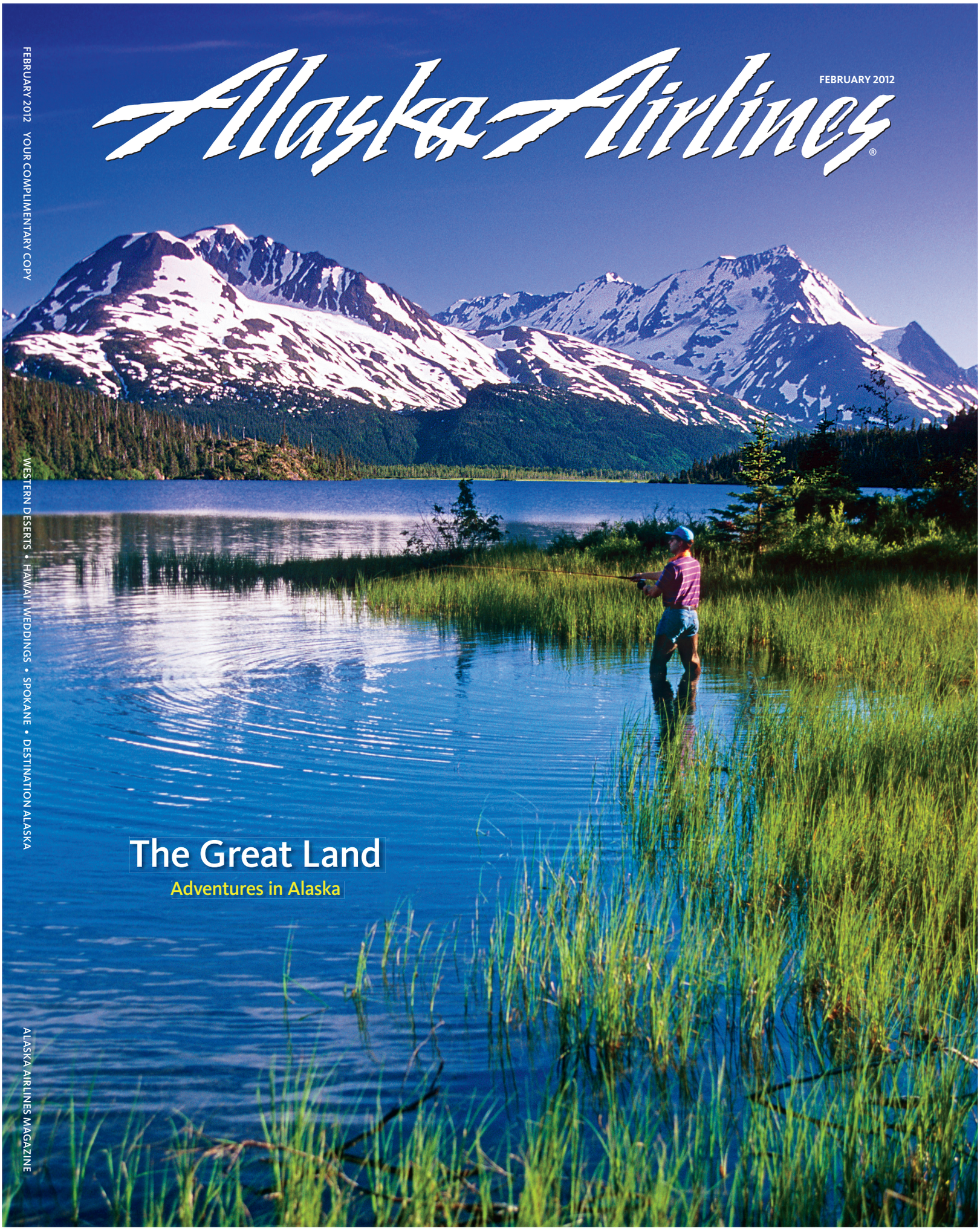
Photo by Adam Gasson / Alamy

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Trade-In Assist.....$1,000●

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IFONG CHEN PHOTOGRAPHY

and urban wineries to top-notch employees, to great schools and health care. Whether it's living in an affordable historic home just five minutes from downtown or making a connection with a business leader, everything in Spokane is approachable. When I hear national news reports referencing the loss of the American dream, I'd like to tell them to come to Spokane, because it's still possible here.

Katy/Nick: Most of our family lives in the Inland Northwest, and they provide a lot of support for us, as well as for our kids, especially as we grow our business. We spend the summers camping, golfing and generally enjoying the outdoors. The winter months are spent playing ice hockey and skiing with our kids.

Josh: My favorite aspect of living in Spokane is the diversity of activities. With around 20 wineries in the area, I can enjoy quality wine without traveling very far. If I want to go to the lake, I'm there in less than 30 minutes. If I want to go snow skiing, I can do it and be back in time for a nice dinner with friends at the end of the day. It's a perfect mixture of urban, suburban and recreation.

Dan: I love the proximity to outdoor activities, while still having the opportunity to enjoy big-city amenities that are easily accessible, like dining, shopping, plays and the international airport. I can work a full day and still be able to enjoy the outdoors. In Spokane, you don't have to wait for the weekend to get out for a mountain-bike ride, play golf, go fishing or ski during the winter.

Q: What are the advantages of doing business in Spokane?

Ellie: After a few years into my first job after college [in another city], I found myself looking for a change of scenery. I moved home to Spokane and began to immerse myself in the family business. The Spokane business community was so welcoming, and I immediately felt effective in my efforts to grow Beacon Hill from an event facility to a full-service catering and event company. Our business has thrived, thanks to a steady Spokane economy and the support of community leaders. Spokane offered me the platform to grow my business and continues to offer me the opportunity to expand. We have found that every effort to network in the Spokane business community is generously rewarded. Another advantage is its conservative and diverse economic base. Because of that, Spokane has not been caught up in the speculative ride that is challenging other parts of the country. The community buys locally and values quality goods and services. Despite the national economic downturn, our business is thriving and experiencing significant growth.

Katy/Nick: Some of the incentives include relatively low taxes, moderately inexpensive rent and utilities, and easy access in and out of the area via the airport. Traffic is always a concern in any city, but in Spokane, you can still be almost anywhere in 15 to 20 minutes.

Josh: I chose Spokane for my first wine-tasting room because I think we have a tremendous city that enjoys all aspects of wine. Opening Nectar Tasting Room has been met with incredible response. The best part of the whole journey has been



PACIFIC NORTHWEST INLANDER / YOUNG KWAK

From facing page, left to right: Attorney Dan Wadkins, 28, likes the proximity of outdoor activities such as fly-fishing. Ellie Aaro, the 34-year-old owner of a catering and events company, enjoys Greater Spokane's family-friendly attractions, including the Green Bluff Growers farming community. Josh Wade, 39, combines business with pleasure as the owner of Nectar Tasting Room, which has been attracting wine aficionados since January 2011.

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Background Info

Ellie Aaro, 34, Owner, Beacon Hill Catering and Events

Driven by a can-do attitude and the conviction that she's "doing what she was born to do," Ellie Aaro has transformed the event facility her father built 15 years ago, on vacant land in east Spokane, into one of the region's most successful full-service catering and events companies, with seven full-time and 30 part-time employees.

In 2001, Ellie left a large West Coast city to "return to her roots" in Spokane. She launched the company's catering service and became its first executive chef, receiving training from the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu culinary school in Paris in 2003. Her staff travels the world to learn the latest industry practices and techniques.

Beacon Hill Catering and Events has received numerous accolades locally and nationally, including being named a 2010 "Best of Weddings" pick by TheKnot.com, a popular wedding-planning website. The year before, the company received Greater Spokane Incorporated's Agora Award for being the top medium-size business in the area. In the summer of 2011, Ellie was invited to join GSI's Board of Trustees, where she uses her energy and ingenuity to help other companies and the business community as a whole. She also partners with other organizations to fundraise for worthy causes.

When she's not catering to her clients' events and celebrations, she celebrates life in Spokane by enjoying the city's numerous parks, lakes and attractions such as Green Bluff Growers with her husband and children.

Nick, 29, and Katy, 31, Brown, Owners, Thin Technologies

Spokane natives Nick and Katy Brown eagerly returned to their hometown in 2009 after being employed at companies outside the area. The couple wanted to start their own business, and they were confident Spokane would provide the support they needed to realize their dream.

In 2010, the Browns launched Thin Technologies, an information-technology-services firm in which Nick leverages the expertise he gained as an IT consultant for large organizations such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, the U.S. Air Force, Chevron and T-Mobile. The company provides customized "enterprise-level" IT solutions to help Spokane's small- and medium-size businesses improve efficiencies in data-protection and disaster-recovery systems.

"We have one of the country's leading experts on virtualization and data storage—Nick—right here in Spokane," notes Katy, who is the chief financial officer, "and we constantly sharpen the skills of our engineers and staff with the newest technologies and certifications in the industry. We are forward-thinking and always looking for new and better ways to increase value for our clients."

The company, which is also involved in various philanthropic endeavors, has experienced rapid success, growing from two employees to nearly 10 in less than two years. A finalist for the 2011 Emerging Innovator of the Year Catalyst Award in Spokane, Nick is a widely recognized IT expert who speaks frequently at national conventions. When he and Katy aren't building their business, they enjoy golfing, camping and skiing with their children.

Josh Wade, 39, Owner, Nectar Tasting Room

In November 2009, Josh Wade blended his keen wine palate with his social-media savvy to launch Drinknectar.com, where he blogs about wine. The site built a loyal following of approximately 12,000 visitors a month and was a 2010 "Best New Wine Blog" finalist in the Wine Blog Awards.

Encouraged by the popularity of the blog, Josh opened Nectar Tasting Room, a co-op shared by five Washington wineries, in January 2011. Featuring a prime downtown location, live music, iPad menus, and a lively, modern, casual atmosphere, the wine bar has quickly become a hot spot for wine connoisseurs and novices alike.

Through his Cheers for Charity program, Josh donates his tasting-room space for fundraisers and runs promotions in which he gives a percentage of sales to local causes.

The entrepreneur has a growing reputation as the city's go-to wine guy. Last year, he was commissioned by wineries across the globe to provide reviews of their wines. In addition, he puts together an annual publication about the region's wine industry and was recently invited to do a weekly wine segment on a local TV show. While his business is conveniently connected to his No. 1 hobby—wine tasting— Josh also likes to unwind at the region's ski slopes in the winter and lakes in the summer.

Dan Wadkins, 28, corporate attorney, Lee & Hayes, PLLC

Two years ago, the young attorney, who grew up in Ellensburg, Washington, landed his current job after graduating from Spokane's Gonzaga University Law School. Spokane-based Lee & Hayes employs 38 attorneys, and has offices in the Pacific Northwest, Texas and Asia. It looks for top talent because the firm represents companies such as Microsoft, T-Mobile and Amazon.com, as well as acclaimed Spokane businesses such as Itron and Telect.

In April, the firm was recognized by *Intellectual Asset Management* magazine for the second year in a row as the top U.S. law firm overall in securing the highest-quality patents for its clients. "We provide counsel for some of the top patent filers in the U.S.," Dan says. "In addition, Lewis Lee, a co-founder of Lee & Hayes, is recognized nationally as an intellectual-property expert and is often interviewed by national media. He recently spun off IP Street, a company that provides online tools to search, filter and analyze patent information. It is this entrepreneurial culture at Lee & Hayes that most attracted me to the firm."

Dan is also a graduate of Gonzaga's Hogan Entrepreneurial Leadership Program, a four-year undergraduate concentration; a board member of Gonzaga's New Venture Lab; and a board member of the Consortium of Leading Energy Efficiency Northwest Companies.

In addition to activities such as fly-fishing and boating, Dan enjoys concerts, dining out, and taking his daughter to the Green Bluff Growers area to buy pumpkins each fall. —*S.J.*

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