Condé Nast Traveler

THE WHITE HOUSE: AN INSIDER'S TOUR

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

October 1992 $3.95

Celebrate!

The TOP 100 WORLD'S BEST

HOTELS
RESORTS
CRUISE LINES
AIRLINES
SPAS

PLUS

Cities that love you

FOUR-DAY GUIDE TO THE NEW BERLIN

10
37136
0 751104 4

Kurt Wachtveitl, has presided over the hotel for a quarter century. A party this month will celebrate the milestone, and members of the Thai royal family, who in any case come regularly to The Oriental, have indicated that they will attend, a singular honor for the hotelier. These have been difficult times for Thailand, with this year's political violence in Bangkok and the troubling prevalence of AIDS. Yet with so elegant a property and so enduring a clientele, and with such money as he might need for refurbishment available at his disposal, Mr. Wachtveitl and his charge would seem to be in an enviable position. **—Simon Winchester**

airline

We were guests in their parlor

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT JUST two decades ago **Singapore Airlines** consisted of a handful of DC-3s and other vintage aircraft. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew made it clear at the time that the infant airline had to turn a profit, or else.

So how did this embryonic operation turn into the airline that has topped our Readers' Choice poll for the fifth consecutive year? For some of the same reasons that Singapore, a tropical island smaller in both population and area than Chicago, has managed to crawl, kick, and then sprint from Third to First World status during the same span—a blend of shrewd planning, superb service, technological expertise, and raw determination. "What characterized us in those early days," says Cheong Choong Kong, the airline's managing director, "was our ambition."

But Singapore Airlines has another ingredient that is largely absent in its host city: panache. Take the uniforms that the cabin attendants wear, for example: original Balmain couture from Paris. The airline also has the remarkable ability to capture the allure of the Orient while reflecting the attention to detail for which the region has become known. From the very start, it has stressed service—Singapore was the first carrier to offer free drinks in economy class and free headsets and hot towels before takeoff. And the food has always been exemplary, a subtle blend of East and West that reflects the various destinations at which the carrier's craft touch down. And then there's that Singapore Airlines attitude. "The attendants were constantly coming back to see how we were," says Anne Presser, a reader from Jacksonville, Florida. "They were very solicitous, as if we were guests in their parlor."

Nor does it hurt that its fleet is the youngest of any major carrier's, that its safety record is stellar, and that its home base at Changi Airport is one of the world's most efficient.

Ever vigilant and determined to keep ahead of the competition, Singapore Airlines is boldly going

Seabourn Cruise Line

The deck of the *Pride* is the right place for viewing the Norwegian Coast. Behind the scenes, chefs A. Lang and Johannes Bacher.

STEVE WILLIAMS

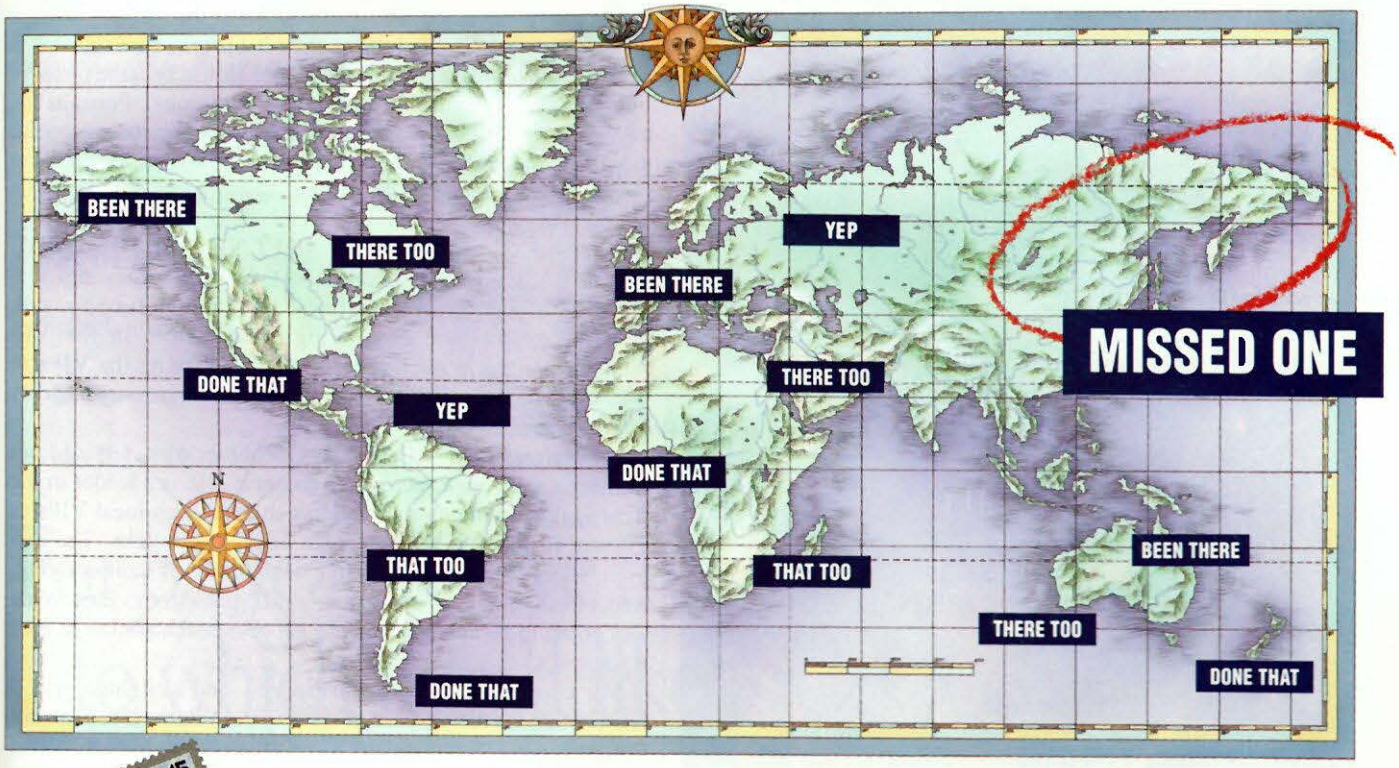
TOP 10 AIRLINES

82.0	Singapore Airlines
80.0	Swissair
75.4	Japan (JAL)
72.9	Thai International
72.6	Lufthansa
72.4	Qantas
70.8	Cathay Pacific
70.1	SAS
70.0	Alaska Airlines
69.2	Virgin Atlantic

TOP 10 U.S. AIRLINES

70.0	Alaska Airlines
58.4	Midwest Express
52.4	Delta
49.8	American
43.7	United
42.2	Southwest
40.6	America West
39.8	Northwest
39.0	Aloha
37.1	Hawaiian

Ranked in order of overall satisfaction: Europe, Canada, Asia, South Ameri



HELSINKI IN '65. BELIZE IN '77. And in '89, that flat tire on the Serengeti. Well, that covers it. You've been everywhere. Wait. What's this? The Russian Far East?

Thanks to the thaw of the Ice Curtain, Alaska Airlines offers direct flights from Anchorage to Magadan and Khabarovsk. As well as extended forays into China. Be one of the first westerners to visit Magadan, a port city built from the ground up by the prisoners of the notorious gulags. Stroll along Karl Marx Street in picturesque Khabarovsk.

As you work your way into the heart of pristine Russian farmland, ride the mighty Trans-Siberian Railway, the longest railroad in the world. From there, visit beautiful Lake Baikal, the largest freshwater lake on the planet.

Your tour can continue into neighboring China where you'll visit such wonders as Beijing, the Great Wall and Harbin, a one-of-a-kind, cultural melting pot few Americans have seen.

We offer all these unforgettable tours complete with Russian and Chinese guides. For more, see your travel agent or send for our brochure.

Now, where were we? Yodeling in the Swiss Alps in '91. And in '93, it all started with that accordion player in Khabarovsk...

RUSSIAN FAR EAST & CHINA.

RUSSIAN FAR EAST AND CHINA VACATIONS
1-800-468-2248

Call for a free brochure of our 6-15 day complete, guided tours. Or fill out and mail this coupon to: Alaska Airlines Russian Far East and China Vacations, P.O. Box 69677, Seattle, Washington 98168-9978.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ CN3

Alaska Airlines VACATIONS