BABY ANIMAL DAY IN VERMONT

Take the family to Baby Animal Day at Billings Farm and Museum in Waterbury Center, May 19-June 27. Highlights include two complimentary rounds of golf at the Vermont National Golf Club, admission to the animal farmyard, an animal feeding activity, and a complimentary pass for a two-night stay. Rates start at $199 per room per night. Visit www.visitwaterbury.com for more information.

NEW SWISSÖTËL IN INDIA

Going to Goa? The new Swissôtel Goa celebrates its debut with a special opening promotion. Stay at least two nights and receive a discount of 25 percent of the best available rate through Mar 31. The hotel offers complimentary breakfast buffet and a three-course set dinner or buffet dinner at North Café, as well as free shuttle to and from Palolem Beach. For reservations, call 800-288-8248 or visit www.goa.swissotel.com.

FINGER LAKES GOLF & GAS PACKAGE

Package of two nights at Ravenwood Golf Club, Host of the 2013 and 2009 New York State Golf Championships (see www.ravenwoodgolf.com), and Bristol Harbour, a Robert Trent Jones designed resort located for scenic views of Seneca Lake (50-68-844-9046, www.hotelsharbour.com). Playing April 1, the package includes one day of golf, a room accommodation at the Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Victor, N.Y., and the Bristol Harbour Resort & Spa, 50-55-728-8000, www.802hotels.com/capture, complimentary golf and gas, and includes lunch and dinner at the course. Through July 25. From $159 per person (before discount). www.goa.swissotel.com/dailyoggles

TRAVEL PLANNING WITH AAA

As the travel season begins, AAA is assisting travelers with a free, travel-planning tool: FindGasAAA.com. Designed to aid travelers, especially those 50 and older, the website helps consumers compare fuel costs and make more informed travel decisions when planning their vacation coming, determines whether to drive or fly to travel destinations, and assists them with the planning and execution of their trip, including flights, car rentals, hotel accommodations and more. To find out more information about the website, visit www.FindGasAAA.com or call 800-288-1935.

NECE REGIS

Austria's revolutionary chocolatier

By Claudia Caposca

Austria, a nation of pure chocolate shores, dives a chocolate fountain into a sea-through-cylinder at the Zotter Chocolate Factory in southeastern Austria. To release the dark-brown ambrosia from its confines, I grip the polished stainless steel at the fountain's base. A thick stream of chocolate fills my small ceramic tasting spoon, obliterating the smiling face of factory founder Josef Zotter imprinted on the cocoa shell. The rich, nutty buttery taste mingling with the unadulterated cocoa dollop returns me to the bean-to-bar production process in some far distant land. My spoon slides away, a fact required to move to another fountain. Next, I try mountain chocolate, followed by milk, white, and chocolate. At left is the original chocolate fountain, 1998. The most popular is the fondue of almonds and sweet chocolate, exciting my taste buds.

The fountain room is among the country’s highlights of an all-inclusive eat chocolate-tasting, Odyssey through Zotter Schokoladen Manufaktur GmbH, one of Europe's premier family-run chocolate producers. A 20-minute tour of the bean-to-bar production process in southeastern Austria attracts 170,000 visitors annually.

Zotter, 52, who began his career as a cake baker and took a leap of faith into an all-you-can-eat chocolate-tasting, Odyssey through Zotter Schokoladen Manufaktur GmbHpursued his dream into creating his own chocolate line. He was inspired by his mother who always filled the house with chocolate. To manage a round of chocolates, he embarked on the pursuit of chocolate, the raw cocoa bean, and the process of chocolate creation. He was on a mission to popularize chocolate and its production process. His vision was to create chocolate for everyone in the world.

Zotter's dream is to share the rich history of chocolate by incorporating European and South American chocolate traditions, as well as the unique flavors of the region. He has created a line of delicious chocolate products that are organic and fair-trade certified. His chocolates are a sophisticated blend of European and South American flavors, and his passion for chocolate is evident in every bite.

Zotter's chocolates are available in a variety of flavors, from traditional chocolate bars to unique flavors such as rosemary and lavender. His chocolates are handcrafted using only the finest ingredients, and his commitment to sustainability is evident in his use of eco-friendly packaging. His chocolates are a celebration of the magic of chocolate and the joy it brings to people around the world.