

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CRAIG FERGUSON

CHECK IN | BERMUDA

A GRANDE DAME PREPARES FOR AMERICA'S CUP

The first thing that strikes us is the artwork. There are four multicolored works by renowned Japanese contemporary artist Takashi Murakami. The flamboyant Reigning Queens pieces by Andy Warhol and Cineole by Damien Hirst, from his famous dots series, also hang in the lobby. In the grand stairway, there's Sz, by artist Philippe Decrauzat, a modern swirly, whirly black and white op-art piece. The hotel is filled with bright, edgy, contemporary art.

It's not what we expected to see in the 130-year-old Hamilton Princess Hotel & Beach Club in Bermuda. But the "Pink Palace" has unveiled a massive \$100 million facelift, going from slightly stodgy to stunning. Now, the grande dame overlooking Hamilton Harbour sits prettier than ever, and poised to be the Official Host Hotel for

America's Cup 2017. Welcome Team Oracle, and anyone else looking for front row seats to the race.

The award-winning redesign was two years in the making and included renovations of most rooms and suites, a new state-of-the-art marina, a new infinity pool, and revamped central courtyard, two new restaurants, a new 8,200-square foot spa, and a 60-plus piece art collection. A sweeping terrace overlooking the water sits on top of a

new retail corridor.

You'll want to stay in one of the newly-renovated rooms in the Poinciana or Gazebo Wing. The stylish room re-do includes soothing palettes punctuated with bright colors and modern Bermudian art. All have updated marble baths; the best have private decks with harbor views.

You could easily spend your entire stay at the hotel. Snag a lounge chair at the sleek, waterside infinity pool, be-

fore wandering up to the 1609 Bar & Restaurant for fresh fish tacos or spicy BBQ sliders. Then head to the marina and watersports center, where you can go sailing, paddle boarding, kayaking, or jet skiing. Private boat charters and tours are also offered. Book a treatment at the new exhale spa, with indoor and outdoor spaces, a lap pool, and yoga pavilion. The adjacent fitness center, with more than 2,100 square feet, boasts water views, and offers a

variety of classes, in case you're starting to feel a bit sloth-y.

In the evening, the buzzing new Marcus' restaurant has fast become an island hotspot. Under the helm of celebrity chef Marcus Samuelsson, the open-kitchen, waterside eatery features signature dishes like the daily whole roasted, locally-caught fish, fire roasted jerk chicken and grilled shrimp tostadas.

But, you say: the hotel isn't on one of Bermuda's famed pink sand beaches. No worries. The hotel has its own private beach in a pretty cove with an on-site bar and restaurant, just a short and free shuttle bus drive away.

HAMILTON PRINCESS HOTEL & BEACH CLUB 800-441-1414, www.thehamiltonprincess.com.

Diane Bair and Pamela Wright can be reached at bairwright@gmail.com.



HERE

NEW HAMPSHIRE SKI DEALS GALORE

Take advantage of a series of deals offered this winter by Cranmore Mountain Resort. For frequent skiers, an online purchase of the Cranmore Value Card (\$79) includes a ticket valid for a day of skiing plus \$20 off all subsequent lift ticket purchases, with no restrictions, plus a free lift ticket after every seventh visit. A military discount, for active duty members with a valid military ID, provides \$15 discount off lift tickets for themselves and card-carrying dependents. (Retired military with appropriate ID receive \$15 off tickets for themselves.) For kids, take \$20 off Kidsrule Mountain Camps lessons, that are booked online by midnight the night before the reservation. (Cannot be combined with other offers.) Bargain seekers will like Sunday Funday Afternoons when discount lift tickets go on sale after 12:30 p.m. on non-holiday Sunday afternoons. (\$29 Adults, \$19 Juniors/Seniors) 800-786-6754, www.cranmore.com/

OPEN HEARTH COOKING CLASSES

History buffs and food lovers will both love Open Hearth Cooking, an upcoming series of seven one-day classes offered by Historic Deerfield. Each four-hour class, held in the kitchen of the 1786 Hall Tavern, has a different theme based on 18th- and early 19th-century food preparation techniques. Hearth cooks also teach preservation technology, seasonality, diet, and the availability of local and imported foods. While the food is cooking, guests will visit a kitchen of a historic house and, after

the food is prepared, will sit down to enjoy a meal together. Includes a bibliography on open hearth cookery. Class size limited to 8 participants ages 16 and up. Early registration recommended. Offered on Saturdays Feb. 4-March 18. 413-775-7217, www.historic-deerfield.org/

THERE

GULET CRUISES IN CROATIA

Set sail off the coast of Croatia this year aboard a Turkish gullet, a two-masted, hand-crafted wooden vessel operated by Peter Sommer Travels. If that name sounds familiar, it should. In the spring of 1994, British archaeologist and filmmaker Peter Sommer spent four and a half months walking 2,000 miles across Turkey, retracing the route of Alexander the Great for a popular BBC/PBS television documentary. Today his company is an award-winning UK-based tour operator specializing in expert-led small group cultural tours, gulet cruises, and private trips in Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Turkey. Debuting this year are two new gulet trips in Croatia: Cruising the Dalmatian Coast from Sibenik to Zadar (Sept. 16-Sept. 23); and Walking and Cruising Southern Dalmatia (Sept. 30-Oct. 7). These join the popular Split to Dubrovnik cruises (June 3-10; Sept. 23-Sept. 30). Maximum guests per cruise: 10. Rates from \$4,140. 1-855-443-3027, www.petersommer.com/guletcruises/croatia/

NEW DELTA FLIGHTS TO FORT MYERS

Starting Feb. 17, you'll have more ways to escape the cold with the announcement by Delta Air Lines of additional weekend routes from Logan Airport (BOS) to Fort Myers (RSW). With that in mind, the Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel — dubbed the "shell capital of the world" — are offering getaways for every traveler, including

not-to-miss guided beach walks with The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum; tours and tastings at the Fort Myers Brewing Co., Fort Myers' first micro brewery, and the recently opened Cape Coral Brewing Co.; visits to the Edison & Ford Winter Estates, former vacation homes of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford; and — of course! — Red Sox spring training (Feb. 23-March 30). 800-237-6444, www.fortmyers-sanibel.com

EVERYWHERE

NEW ROAD TRIP APP

Looking for a way to book hotels and save while on the road? Online and mobile travel company priceline.com has announced the in-app launch of Road Deals, a new feature which highlights exclusive deals for travelers en route to their final destination. Once you download the iOS or Android app, you can start driving, enter a destination, and immediately see one-of-a-kind deals and deep discounts in real time along the route. Hotels are automatically refreshed on the route ahead and can be booked within seconds. Free. www.priceline.com/mobile-app

EASY-TO-PACK MULTI-PORT CHARGER

Minimize the number of device plugs you need to pack with an iClever: BoostCube TC04 4-Port USB Wall Charger. Designed for the latest generation of devices — and small enough to fit in the palm of your hand — the chargers feature a convenient folding wall plug for easy storage while traveling, as well as SmartID ports for device recognition and quick charging efficiency. Made with durable materials to ensure over-current, short-circuit, and over-temperature protection. \$19.99. www.iclever.com/category/boostcube

NECEE REGIS