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### **Be Prepared**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) advises that the restrictions on liquids, gels and aerosols in carry-on bags will be in place for the foreseeable future. Planning ahead for security checkpoints can have a significant impact on wait times. Remember the 3-1-1 rule—3 oz. bottles or less for all liquids, gels and aerosols, placed in a 1 qt. sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag, one bag per passenger. These must be placed separately in a security bin for X-ray screening. And don't forget to remove all footwear ahead of time.

### **Relax on Turkey Day!**

Hard to think about Thanksgiving when we are sitting by the pool, but "A Harvest Home Thanksgiving Package" is already being advertised. This 4- night offer includes Thanksgiving dinner at an inn in New Hampshire, shopping and home décor workshops, \$300 in discounts to the outlet mall, and special after-hour sales in nearby shops exclusively for the inn's guests. In addition to all of this, you get 4 nights accommodations', and breakfast starting at \$516 per couple for a standard room and \$676 for a fireplace suite. Taxes and gratuities are additional.

### **Americans - lowest # of vacation days**

According to recent studies by tourist organizations, Americans average only 13 vacation days, while Italians have 42. Perhaps that is why they have "La Dolce Vita".

### **Flip Flop Weather**

Finally the long lazy days of summer are headed our way. There is still plenty of time to plan a summer vacation...and it's not too early to start thinking of those winter vacation getaways.

### **No Passport Yet?**

Still didn't get around to getting your passport? Don't worry, you can still plan a Caribbean vacation. No passport is needed for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The U.S.V.I. has launched a summer promotion to celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas became U.S territories. If you book by July 15, you can travel through Aug.31 and get a fifth night free, based on a five-night minimum stay at several hotels. The program also offers savings of up to \$500 on activities, tours, and sightseeing.

### **Miss snow?**

If you didn't get enough skiing in this past winter, how about planning a trip to Argentina? You can spend 3 nights in Buenos Aires, 2 nights in Puerto Madryn visiting a wildlife sanctuary, and 3 nights in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego skiing. Priced from \$1969.00 per person land only for travel June to September.

### **New Deluxe Brand**

Royal Caribbean's Celebrity Cruises introduced its newest ship, the 710-guest Celebrity Journey. The ship is part of a new deluxe brand called Azamara Cruises. This new brand is a step above premium, but a rung below luxury. It should appeal to the well-seasoned cruiser who likes an intimate onboard experience combined with access to less-traveled ports of call. Azamara, which loosely means "blue sea," will offer butler service in all staterooms, as well as concierge-style amenities, including fresh-cut flowers, complimentary use of Frette cotton robes and more.

### **Summer Sales**

Lots of great pricing for trips this summer. Spend 7 nights in Cancun with non-stop air from Hartford from \$899 per person, all-inclusive, at the Oasis Viva Beach. Two kids, 12 years and under, stay, play and eat free when traveling with two adults. Prefer to get away without the kids? Stay at Secrets Capri in Riviera May, an adults-only, unlimited luxury all-inclusive from \$1599 per person including non-stop air from Hartford.

### **Girlfriend Getaways**

Women-only vacations are a thriving travel trend. There are trips for every interest -- adventure and nature, culture and history, gourmet dining, wines and cooking, mind, body and spirit, shopping and spas to name a few. Destinations include Asia, Bermuda, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin American and North America.

### **One Hot Ticket**

The Edinburgh Military Tattoo is one of the most coveted tickets every year. Globus has a number of Great Britain vacations in the month of August that include tickets to this amazing spectacle of Scottish heritage.

The Edinburgh Military Tattoo is one of the most spectacular shows in the world, enjoyed by an international television audience of 100 million. Scotland's stunning annual outdoor military spectacular is set against the magnificent backdrop of Edinburgh Castle. It features pipes & drums, massed military bands, display teams, dancers and acts from around the world. You can also attend the Jazz and Blues Festival, the International Film Festival and many more.

**Call or e-mail to learn about these and other specials**

## **Trips and Seminars**

### **Abruzzo Region**

The Abruzzo region was host to this year's Italian Symposium and I was again fortunate to be invited. On arrival in Pescara, on the Adriatic Sea, we were greeted by press, officials and a band playing as this was the inaugural flight of direct service by Eurofly Airlines from JFK. This warm, inviting welcome was our first experience with the hospitable people of the region.

Abruzzo is considered, in Italy and abroad, to be a clean and pure livable paradise with over 30% of its territory classified as parks and nature reserves. It is a major destination for nature enthusiasts. The region is dotted with ancient mountaintop towns and a coastline of beach resorts and fishing villages and is within a two-hour drive from Rome.

Every year the beaches of Abruzzo win awards for being clean and pollution-free. Sailing and windsurfing are available at the sea and on the many lakes, along with many other water-sports. The variety of the countryside from mountain paths to breath-taking descents and dirt tracks to grassy meadows makes this area a paradise for cyclists. There are hundreds of marked trails for hiking in the mountains and national parks and Abruzzo's ski resorts are some of the best equipped in the Apennines.

The cuisine of Abruzzo is a blend of devotion to pure and natural ingredients. Good examples are the extra virgin olive oil, to which the village of Loreto Aprutino has dedicated a museum and an annual festival. Also saffron, the "red gold" of the Navelli plateau, a wonderful range of pecorino cheeses filled with the scent of mountain herbs and the sweet Sulmona sugared almonds are just a few of their products. Abruzzo's wine comes from vineyards that benefit from a blend of southern sun, sea breezes and mountain air. Montepulciano d'Abruzzo wine regularly wins awards worldwide. Summer is one long feast in Abruzzo with gastronomic events and festivals that are filled with hearty peasant food and spoils from the sea.

Abruzzo's castles, churches and museums along with the natural beauty of the region are waiting to be discovered.

Look for photos on my website!

### **Seminars**

**Puerto Rico** Tourist Board presented a seminar on the many changes on their island. Several hotels are changing names --The Normandie Hotel will become a W Hotel, The Paradisus will become a Grand Melia, the Westin Rio Mar will become a Wyndham and Martineau Bay on Vieques will become a W hotel. There are also several small inns and B&B's on the island.

With no passport required, Puerto Rico continues to be a popular destination.

**Anguilla** is only 16 miles long and 3 miles at the widest point, but boasts 33 white sand beaches with crystal clear waters, world-class accommodations and great restaurants. The 18-hole Greg Norman Championship Golf Course is now open. There are now two daily flights from San Juan making it much easier to fly into Anguilla. This year they are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their independence. There are accommodations to please all lifestyles and budgets from luxurious villas, deluxe resorts to small inns and guesthouses.

**St.Lucia** boasts to have more artists, poets, writers and Nobel Prize winners per capita than any country in the world. Her most precious treasure is her people. You will find the majestic Piton Mountains, world heritage nature reserves, idyllic beaches, magnificent waterfalls, rainforests and all types of activities from hiking, scuba and snorkeling, to tennis and golf.

**The Italian Workshop** in New York, gave me the opportunity to meet with various tour operators and hotel representatives from 12 of the 20 regions of Italy. The Province of Macerata presented an Opera Recital for attendees which highlighted their 43<sup>rd</sup> Opera Season. The Sferisterio Opera Festival, which runs from July 26 to August 12, revolves around a new theme each year. This year's program features Macbeth and Messa da Requiem by Verdi, Norma by Bellini, and Maria Stuarda by Donizetti.