

# **CONTENTS**



**WELCOME MESSAGE** Stan Soroka's latest Club Member update



CHECKING IN
A villa, a theme park and an oceanfront resort await



THE VIEW FROM HERE Experience Victorian glamour in Scotland



**ONE CITY, FIVE WAYS: LOS CABOS**From beaches to bars, discover Los Cabos, Mexico



**MEET THE TEAM**Sylvia C. gives us her best tips on enjoying Las Vegas like a local



CHARLESTON
Rich in culture, history and architecture, Charleston delivers
Southern charm



THE CLUBHOUSE

Discover the great cities of America and
Europe with ClubPartner Perk Great

Adventures



THE Q⊕A How Maui's tranquil environment inspired Interior Designer Beatrice Girelli's work for HGV



**SESOKO**Escape to this island and our upcoming HGV property in Japan



**48 HOURS IN CARLSBAD**How to spend the best
48-hours at Marbrisa



**CLUB PARTNER PERKS**Sail from Athens to Rome on the Azamara Pursuit



**RCI** National Park ideas for your next road trip

## TRAVELER



## Welcome from Stan Soroka

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Dear Club Members,

As we head into 2021, I find myself optimistic about the future of travel. While the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, there's a sense of re-awakening that has me encouraged. Las Vegas shows are live once more. Hawaii is finally welcoming trans-Pacific travelers, and our re-opened properties on The Big Island and Oahu cannot wait to see you back. As demand for rooms continues to increase each month, I strongly urge you to book as early as possible to find the dates you wish to travel.

After a period of prolonged uncertainty, it's a great feeling to be getting back into the mode of vacation planning. It's a feeling that has been long missed by those of us who love to travel. Building on that sentiment, this issue of Club Traveler takes a deep dive into several new HGV destinations to help you start dreaming and planning.

First, we present five ways to explore Los Cabos, home to our first HGV property in Mexico, La Pacifica Los Cabos by Hilton Club. Located on a luxurious oceanfront setting, this property will deliver access to the rich history, beautiful nature and exciting nightlife found in the Baja Peninsula.

Our first feature explores the sweet Southern hospitality of Charleston, South Carolina. Rich in culture, history and architecture, this timeless city will be home to Liberty Place Charleston by Hilton Club, opening in June 2021. Whether you choose to stroll through one of the historical boroughs or experience fine dining, a stay in this historic city delivers the ultimate in Southern charm.

Our second feature delves into the beauty of Sesoko, Japan. Located on northern Okinawa's secluded Sesoko Island, this idyllic beach location will be home to The Beach Resort Sesoko by Hilton Club. A stay at this beautiful resort will offer access to powder-white stretches of sand, crystal-clear oceans and cultural heritage sites.

Elsewhere in this issue, we present the ideal itinerary for spending 48 hours in sunny Carlsbad, California. And Team Member Sylvia C. offers insider tips for enjoying Las Vegas.

Club Members continue to share their stories about traveling with HGV. It's wonderful to hear that the steps we are taking under our Enhanced Care Guidelines are delivering outstanding vacation experiences. To assist you with future travel planning, be sure to continue visiting our Travel Updates page. Also, don't forget to check the Club News page for updates on your Club membership program in light of COVID-19. As we've communicated, we are saving unused 2020 ClubPoints at no cost to you and will lift the temporary Hilton Honors Points conversion reduction starting on January 1, 2021.

I wish you the happiest of holidays with your loved ones and friends. Here's to a New Year and a fresh start on travel and life.

Happy and safe travels,

**Stan Soroka**Chief Customer Officer



# Restorative Retreats

A picturesque villa in Italy, a Bermuda-style property in Florida and an oceanfront resort in Hilton Head – these HGV properties are more than just your home away from home



## Hilton Grand Vacations Club at SeaWorld

6924 Grand Vacations Way, Orlando, FL

Minutes from one of the world's greatest theme parks, Hilton Grand Vacations Club at SeaWorld is where you go for that quintessential family vacation. You know the kind: spacious rooms, outdoor swimming pools, manicured gardens and plenty of things to do near the resort for kids and grown-ups alike. The property is all about removing the stresses of everyday life, and replacing them with fun and relaxation. Guests can lounge by the three heated swimming pools or unwind in one of the five whirlpool spas, while the kids splash about in the two children's pools. The one-, two-, and three-bedroom suites are recently renovated with a Bermuda-style theme. There's plenty of character: Think big, comfortable beds, ceiling fans and balconies with a table and chairs. Bathrooms feature free-standing showers and separate tubs in most rooms. Dining is taken care of, too: Guests can prepare meals in their suites (the on-site market and deli are well-stocked, too, in case you need to grab something quick to eat).



## Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Borgo alle Vigne

Via di Casanova, 56030 Selvatelle PI, Italy

Tuscany in the fall is glorious, and there's perhaps nowhere better to take in the crisper temperatures and changing leaves than at Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Borgo alle Vigne, a picturesque property on the hills of Selvatelles, just 40 minutes from Pisa. A verdant, olive treelined drive takes you past manicured gardens to an elegant white villa with a light-filled entrance and high ceilings. Inside, marble finishings and elegant Italian-designed sofas instantly help you feel at home, while staff welcome you with the fondness of old friends. The suites themselves are just as stylish, with balconies and fully-equipped kitchens, plus plenty of dining and living space, perfect for big family gatherings or just relaxing after a day out exploring. Sun seekers will love the seasonal outdoor swimming pool, complete with views over the Tuscan countryside. Visit the resort's Registration building where there is a small selection of wines to purchase or ask the knowledgeable concierge team about the Members' Wine Tasting Dinner, held at neighboring wineries.



#### Ocean Oak Resort by Hilton Grand Vacation

41 S Forest Beach Dr, Hilton Head Island, SC

Standard hotels seem all the more bleak when you wander into Ocean Oak Resort by Hilton Grand Vacations, a buzzy resort-style oceanfront property in Hilton Head designed for travelers wanting a restorative vacation. There's the sweeping country backdrop that is perfect for long walks, or the bluegrass-colored golf courses and tennis courts nearby. With direct beach access and two pristine swimming pools, this is the perfect place to let long, lazy days drift by while kicking back on a lounger, reading a great book and sipping a cool cocktail. Inside, two-bedroom suites lend themselves to bringing the entire family along, thanks to luxurious bedrooms, separate living and dining rooms, and sofa beds for extra guests. Flatscreen televisions and DVD players ensure the whole family is entertained.

When it comes to dining, options abound. Enjoy an outdoor barbecue at the grilling stations, book one of the resort's gourmet restaurants or prepare a casual meal in your suite.

#### **ClubPoints Planning Tip**

## Hilton Grand Vacations Orlando at SeaWorld

Platinum Season: 660 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a studio to 9,600 Points for a 7-night stay in a three-bedroom plus

Gold Season: 480 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a studio to 7,000 Points for a 7-night stay in a three-bedroom plus

Silver Season: 330 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a studio to 4,800 Points for a 7-night stay in a three-bedroom plus

#### Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Borgo alle Vigne

Platinum Season: 1,440 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a one-bedroom to 11,500 Points for a 7-night stay in a three-bedroom premier

Gold Season: 1,020 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a one-bedroom to 9,600 Points for a 7-night stay in a three-bedroom premier

#### Ocean Oak Resort by Hilton Grand Vacations

Platinum Season: 2,100 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a two-bedroom to 9,600 Points for a 7-night stay in a two-bedroom premier Gold Season: 1,500 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a two-bedroom to 7,000 Points for a 7-night stay in a two-bedroom premier Silver Season: 1,050 Points for a 3-night stay (Mon-Thu) in a two-bedroom to 4,800 Points for a 7-night stay in a two-bedroom premier





Climbing ivy partially covers the property's red-brick exterior

#### Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Craigendarroch Suites

Set along the banks of the River Dee, in the heart of Royal Deeside and on the edge of Scotland's Ballater Village, is one of the region's most beautiful resorts. Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Craigendarroch Suites has character in spades – from the red-brick, ivy-clad façade to the spacious, light-filled lobby decked out in polished mahogany. This resort was once a Victorian country manor, and the sense of grandeur remains with high ceilings, comfortable chesterfields and floor-to-ceiling windows. The resort's real essence is pure escapism, whether that's enjoying a "wee dram" of whisky in the bar, playing tennis at the on-site court or relaxing in the resort's impeccable spa.





Interiors are decidedly cozy, with plush armchairs and natural furnishings



Los Cabos sits on a sea-flanked strip of cacti-peppered Mexican desert at the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula, where the Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Cortez intersect.

A beach paradise with so much more than year-round sunshine and world-famous tacos, it is surrounded by turquoise waters and hulking, golden desert rocks, including El Arco – the natural landmark of Cabo San Lucas.

The area seamlessly combines incredible wildlife and breathtaking scenery with a thriving art scene, heart-pumping activities and impressive culinary offerings. It's no wonder this secluded hotspot attracts A-list devotees, such as George Clooney and Jennifer Aniston, every year.



#### The Nature Lovers

The Sea of Cortez was dubbed "the world's aquarium" by explorer Jacques Cousteau and for good reason. Teeming with exotic marine life and over 900 species of fish, this ocean has achieved legendary status among divers and marine biologists around the world.

A large number of marine mammals, including gray whales, blue whales and craggy humpbacks gather just offshore from April to December, so you can expect serious whale-watching potential. Spotting pods of curious bottlenose dolphins, whale sharks and plump sea lions lazing in the sun from a sailboat or the beach is almost guaranteed. Book a snorkeling or scuba session to discover even more wonders under the surface, such as green turtles, sting-rays, squid and barracuda.

A two-hour drive up the coast toward La Paz is the Unesco World Heritage-listed island of Espíritu Santo, known for its coral reefs and clear, sheltered waters. But if you'd rather stay on dry land, stroll through Los Cabos's downtown area to spot hummingbirds, iguanas and desert falcons. And, inland, the desert wilderness unfolds to reveal enormous cacti that are 500 years old.



#### The Gourmand

Baja California-style fish tacos are recreated everywhere from London to Los Angeles. Enjoy them at their authentic best here from street stands or try imaginative variations paired with tequila, mezcal and even grasshoppers at colorful cantina La Lupita.

Mexican restaurants line the shores with popular spots, including La Revolución and Las Cazuelas del Don El Tequila. For traditional Mexican fine dining head to Don Sanchez for its stunning hacienda courtyard and contemporary menu.

The farm-to-table concept is a big deal in Los Cabos so travel one-mile inland to Flora Farms, which serves meals made from produce grown on its 25-acre plot or try Los Tamarindos, an organic farm and restaurant with meals served in a 7,000-square-foot garden.

Nobu brings a taste of Japan to Mexico. Try the restaurant's signature miso black cod and fresh yellowtail sashimi dishes, which fit perfectly with their new ocean setting. Or visit Vela at the Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort, home to HGV's upcoming La Pacifica Los Cabos by Hilton Club, known for its regional take on Italian cuisine with all fresh Mexican ingredients.

# Los Cabos: One city, five ways



#### The Art Lover

Locals will claim the best art in Los Cabos is created by nature, which is hard to dispute, but there's also a thriving art scene. Tucked away behind the historic main square and church in San José del Cabo, you'll find an art district with fine-art galleries displaying paintings, sculptures and photography by local and international artists.

The art walk takes place along the cobblestoned streets every Thursday from November to June, and has become quite an event on the local calendar. Sip wine, sample local cheese and enjoy the scene to a soundtrack of live traditional music.

The Jonathan Sanchez fine jewelry gallery, just off the main square, sells one-of-a-kind pieces of jewelry, and the area is the perfect place to pick up unique Mexican handicrafts. From Ernest Hemingway to Hollywood actor John Wayne, the culture and rich history of Los Cabos has been inspiring storytellers, musicians and artists for centuries.



#### The Beach Lover

The white, clean sandy beaches of Los Cabos have been awarded 22 Blue Flag awards, more than anywhere else in Mexico. For a day to remember swimming and snorkeling in sheltered bays and coves head to Medano Beach in Cabo San Lucas and Lovers
Beach near El Arco for the perfect selfie.

Beaches here offer a lively launchpad for fun activities from jet skiing to surfing before becoming a hotspot for a margarita as the sun dips. If you prefer a bit more privacy, take a drive 40 miles north of San José del Cabo to Cabo Pulmo Marine Park for some peace and quiet, but also the finest snorkeling among clouds of colorful fish. For a worthwhile challenge, seek out the pristine Playa Anónima, which means, "unnamed beach" and isn't signposted from the road.

### The Night Owl

Sunset in Los Cabos is never taken for granted, and Sunset Monalisa, an open-air restaurant and champagne bar, is one of the best spots to watch the show. Another great place to start (or end) the night is with cocktails at Azul at Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort, which has one of Los Cabos's largest tequila collections.

For live local music and laid-back vibes head to bars like Tabasco, Mango's or Zippers, set next to a legendary surf break by the same name.

Van Halen singer Sammy Hagar first put Los Cabos on the global-nightlife map when he opened late-night restaurant and bar Cabo Wabo Cantina in 1990. But if you're in the mood for a coldcerveza, don't miss Baja Brewing Company, which has three locations in the area and is leading the artisanal craft beer charge.





# My life, my city

In the first of our revamped series, we meet the people behind your Hilton Grand Vacations property. Here, Sylvia C., assistant executive housekeeper at Hilton Grand Vacations Club at The Flamingo shares what she loves most about living in Las Vegas.

My job is to manage the day-to-day housekeeping operations at the resort. My team and I make sure our Owners and guests have a clean and comfortable environment. It's something I really take pride in.

No two days are the same at HGV. We have a morning meeting with our team that involves letting everyone know what they will be doing during their shift. Once the day begins, the cleaning team sets about making the rooms spotless, and I walk around the property, checking areas like the pool and the gym.

I love my job. HGV is a great company to work for - it's my second home, and as Team Members, we are treated like family.

In June, we started welcoming Team Members back to work. As part of their onboarding experience, we reviewed the cleaning procedures we had in place before COVID-19, in addition to HGV's Enhanced Care Guidelines, which were released in May 2020.

We have signs informing our guests about the cleaning and disinfecting efforts taking place in property. We want to ensure they feel safe during their stay.

My job involves interacting with a lot of guests around the property to make sure they're happy. We know our Owners well, and we often get the rooms ready with extra touches like treats or balloons for special occasions, such as anniversaries or birthdays. People come to visit us from all around the world, which is amazing.

When people think of Las Vegas they think of The Strip, but we

have so many cute neighborhoods. There is always something to do here. Outdoor activities range from ball games to visiting farmers markets, and there's also the lively Las Vegas Arts District.

I love the serenity you can find around Las Vegas. About 20 miles west of The Strip, you'll find Red Rock Canyon, which is amazing for hiking, as is Valley of Fire State Park, which is 50 miles northeast of the city.

If you want to go snowboarding, an easy 38-mile drive northwest takes you to Mount Charleston. Plus, Lake Mead and the Colorado River are close by. There are also the long-abandoned ghost towns on desert roads out of the city — a fascinating reminder of Nevada's boom-and-bust mining history.

There are many things you can do after you wake up in Las Vegas. We have hiking, orchid farms and hockey games, and there's even the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. I have kids, so in the summer we like to go to the water parks. Sometimes there might be a carnival in town, or we'll go to the museums and check out a new local restaurant.

Las Vegas has so many amazing shops. There are shops inside the casinos, plus outlet malls at the south end of The Strip and nice shopping centers with activities for the entire family. I like the one at Downtown Summerlin on the western outskirts of the city.

My advice to people heading to Las Vegas? Try everything out. There are so many experiences for everyone. I recommend making a plan of what you want to do before you arrive. There's so much to do, and trust me, you'll want to do it all!

To book any of the above holidays or for more information, visit the Club website.



There is a reason that Charleston has topped must-go travel lists for years. Take the city's Southern charm, its collection of historic buildings, the gas-lamp-lit cobblestone streets and the trees swathed in Spanish Moss. Add a thriving culinary scene, shopping adventures and boundary-pushing art, and it's no wonder tourists keep coming back for more. But if you veer off the beaten paths, you'll discover the true soul of this South Carolina city. Charleston is soon to be the home of Liberty Place Charleston by Hilton Club and is expected to open its doors to welcome Club Members on June 5, 2021. Here we share our guide to seeing an authentic view of the city — everything from the rich cultural heritage to shrimp boat watching and even saving sea turtles.

#### Historic Charleston's Best-Kept Secret: The Boroughs

Most visitors to Charleston never leave the bottom part of the peninsula. (And, yes, there's plenty to see in the French Quarter, King Street and South of Broad.) Yet, for a different view of Historic Downtown, check out The Boroughs. Comprising the neighborhoods of Cannonborough/Elliotborough, Radcliffeborough, Ansonborough and Mazyk-Wraggborough, each has a distinct personality and features interesting architectural sites and shops selling locally made goods — from handcrafted candles at Candlefish (270 King St.) to eco-friendly, hand-printed shirts at Artisan Tees (68 Spring St.). There's even a balloon bar where you can customize helium-filled delights. It's Cannonborough Collective (185 St. Philip St.) and it will make you smile.









#### Cannon Street 87, 79, 11 Cannon St. Charleston, SC 29403

King Street in Downtown
Charleston gets all the love,
but Cannon Street, here in the
Boroughs, includes an equally
eclectic array of shops and
restaurants, without all the crowds
of tourists. Check out Beads
on Cannon for a vast assortment of
gems, stones, beads and baubles;
Indigo & Cotton for menswear; and
European cafe Babas, for espresso
and a perfect ham-and-butter
baguette — or a fizzy wine spritz,
deviled eggs and bar nuts for a predinner snack.

#### South Carolina Aquarium 100 Aquarium Wharf Charleston, SC 29401

Perched on the historic Charleston Harbor, the South Carolina Aquarium houses more than 10,000 plants and animals. But the best thing about it is the Sea Turtle Care Center, which helps sick, endangered sea turtles. Once they're nursed back to health, the aquarium releases them at local county parks. Releases are announced a few days beforehand, so be sure to check the aquarium's website and social media pages for updates.

#### The Borough Houses 35 & 35 ½ Calhoun St. Charleston, SC 29401

Constructed in 1852 by Irish immigrants, these sister homes are examples of the quintessential Charleston singlehouse, featuring shuttered windows, red-tin roofs and side porches on every level that offer visitors a glimpse of what life was really like in the 18th and 19th centuries. Located by what was Gadsden's Wharf, they are the last remnants of what was a thriving Black community — anchored by the Ansonborough Homes, demolished in 1993.

#### **LOCAL'S VIEW:**

Allison Williamson, Director, Charleston Artist Collective



I grew up in Mount Pleasant. I moved away for quite some time, but 12 years ago, my husband and I decided to move back to raise our twin boys and be closer to family.

I opened my Mount Pleasant Art studio in 2018 to showcase local artists and offer studio spaces. Shortly after, a photography gallery, The Heart of Gold, took the space next door.

What I love about Mount Pleasant is that it's so close to downtown and to the beaches: the Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island. Shem Creek is beautiful for kayaking and watching sunsets. You can buy fresh fish and shrimp right off the dock.

There are a lot of people from all over the United States who have moved here. I think that's what has attracted people to this area: The quality of living, which has an authentic coastal, relaxed vibe.

#### The Coastal Town Across The Bridge: Mount Pleasant

Bike (or drive) across the stunning Ravenel Bridge — which spans about 2.5 miles across the Cooper River — and you'll find yourself in Mount Pleasant, a coastal town east of Charleston with a laid back vibe and lots of charm. Locals love this spot for its postcard-perfect Old Village, where you can slurp on Mud Pie milkshakes at Pitt Street Pharmacy (111 Pitt St.) and pick up locally designed, Southern-smocked children's dresses at the adorable Shrimp and Grits Kids (1260 Appling Dr.). Work in a wellness walk by touring the 20 historical markers that are scattered throughout the roadsides.



A drive across the Arthur Ravenel Jr Bridge takes you from Charleston to Mount Pleasant, home of Shem Creek where shrimp boats and seafood restaurants abound

## Shem Creek Park and Boardwalk Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Minutes from the Old Village District, Shem Creek embodies authentic Southern coastal living. Explore the area by water by renting kayaks or paddle boats — or just stroll along the 2,200-foot boardwalk, watching the shrimp and crab boats, marveling at dolphins leaping in and out of the harbor, and dining dockside as the sun sets along the water. Then, check out Nico for martinis, oysters and a decadent lobster roll served with pommes frites and camembert fondue (201 Coleman Blvd.).



#### Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion 99 Harry M. Hallman Jr Blvd. Mt Pleasant, SC 29464

The local Gullah/Geechee tradition of basket-weaving using sweetgrass is something to behold. Skip the crowded markets in Downtown Charleston and head to Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Pavilion in Mount Pleasant Memorial Waterfront Park. Here local artisans demonstrate their craft — which dates back 300 years to Africa — and sell their wares. You'll also find basket display cases and a screening area for documentaries.



#### Old Village Historic District Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Many of the buildings in Mount Pleasant's Old Village date back to the early 19th century (the oldest house is from 1759). For that throwback Main Street USA vibe, hit up Pitt Street Pharmacy, an old-fashioned drug store and soda fountain that's been open since 1937 (111 Pitt St.). More modern businesses have made their home in quaint Old Village too, such as contemporary art galleries Charleston Artist Collective and Heart of Gold (both at 414 Whilden St.).

#### Home to thousands of historic buildings, Charleston is like an architectural museum













#### Itinerary-worthy Tour: James Island

A unique island tucked into the waters of the Charleston Harbor and the Stono and Folly Rivers, James Island offers scenic views of marshes and majestic trees. What was once farmland has transformed into a quaint residential town with a rich history. Take a ferry to Fort Sumter and stand in the spot where the Civil War began. Tour mansions and plantations, and explore a World War II aircraft carrier. Or pack a picnic and enjoy the flower-filled meadows of the 643-acre county park and float down the 500-foot lazy river in the Splash Zone water park.



Folly Beach 101 E Arctic Ave. Folly Beach, SC 29439

Once you're in James Island, it's a short drive, kayak trip or paddle-board adventure away to Folly Beach, one of Charleston's most beloved seaside escapes. You'll find a maritime forest, a lighthouse and optimal waves for surfing. Plus, the 1,045-foot pier offers great saltwater fishing, including Spanish mackerel, trout, spot tail bass, pompano and shark.



#### McLeod Plantation Historic Site 325 Country Club Dr. Charleston, SC 29412

McLeod Plantation, which dates back to 1851, was known for its sea island cotton. But the 37-acre property is now a preserved Gullah/Geechee heritage site, paying tribute to the enslaved Africans and their cultural contributions to South Carolina's Lowcountry. The tours are thoughtful, insightful and mainly outdoors (a plus for post-COVID-19 travel).



Terrace Theater Drive-in 1956 Maybank Hwy Charleston, SC 29412

This popular indie cinema has a gloriously retro ambiance — and it's offering drive-in flicks for socially distanced movie-watching. Order your concessions ahead for pick-up, or get provisions at Crust Wood Fired Pizza or Zia Taqueria next door. An added bonus: Terrace Theater raises money for a variety of causes, including Lowcountry Orphan Relief.

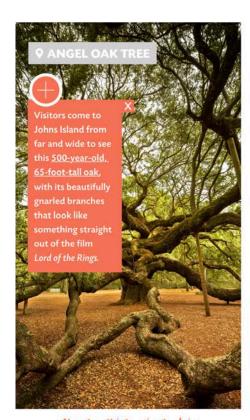


#### Throughout the Peninsula

Charleston native street artist Shepard Fairey has left his stamp on several buildings in Downtown Charleston, including outside his alma mater, the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art (161 Calhoun St.). Local artist David Boatwright's "Renoir Redux" mural (68 ½ Queen St.), an homage to the Old Master's "Luncheon of the Boating Party," is also a downtown favorite.

North and East Central boast a trove of outdoor art, too. Outside the John L. Dart Branch Library (1067 King St.) is Brooklyn-based R. Robots' mural for Cynthia Graham Hurd, who was killed in the 2015 shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The West Ashley neighborhood of Avondale has Alycia Alley (between Nicholson and Daniel Streets), featuring an ever-expanding cast of murals, including one of actor Bill Murray.

#### **INSTAGRAM WORTHY TREKS**



About a thirty-minute drive from Downtown Charleston

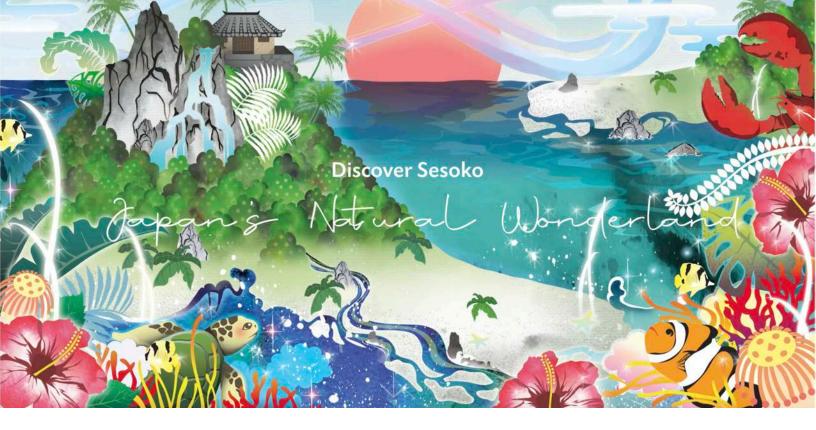


About a one-hour drive from Downtown Charleston



About a one-hour drive from Downtown Charleston

Now that you have a comprehensive guide full of the best Charleston has to offer, explore the brand-new Liberty Place Charleston by Hilton Club. Steps away from Charleston's historic landmarks, upscale restaurants and trendy shops amid charming Southern architecture, this new property boasts well-appointed studios and suites accompanied by superb on-site amenities, including a lobby bar, Owners' lounge and fitness center. Slated to open on June 5, 2021, be sure to book your Charleston vacation as soon as the Club Reservation window is announced.



An idyllic island paradise with more than meets the eye

Sesoko island is one of Japan's most dreamy destinations. From the sky, it looks like an upside-down teardrop: A 5-mile circle of tropical jungle, ringed with coral reefs and edged with white beaches. Located just off the coast of Okinawa, Sesoko is one of the country's Nanseishoto — a tropical archipelago of dots that stretches from Southern Japan to Taiwan.

It is renowned for its unspoiled beaches, coral reefs in dazzling clear waters, tropical vistas, secluded caves nestled between rocky outcroppings and the Pacific Ocean's million shades of blue. But don't let the serene setting fool you. From "sea walking" to hiking through waterfalls, it's an action-packed spot for a luxury family holiday.



The island of Sesoko is located off the coast of Okinawa, and is the location of the soon-to-open The Beach Resort Sosoko by Hilton Club

#### First: the beach

Visitors come for the sun-soaked beaches. Most famous among them is the eponymous Sesoko Beach — a 0.5 mile-long strip along the West Coast, with dramatic sunsets and views dominated by craggy Mount Gusuku on neighboring le Island.

Aside from the panoramic vista, this beach is as family-friendly as it gets with daily lifeguards, shallows that offer close-up views of multi-colored fish as if you were in a natural aquarium, and emerald green oceans that cater for both gentle paddling and wild watersports.

And when the waters get choppy, head to Anchi-hama, on the opposite side of the island. Located underneath the bridge to the mainland, its sheltered position offers waveless, translucent waters and fish that swim around your ankles. Visitors can buy snorkel gear at the bayside shop, but on most days it's so clear you won't even need it.



For crystal-clear water and picture-perfect white-sand beaches, look no further than Sesoko Beach, located on the island's West Coast



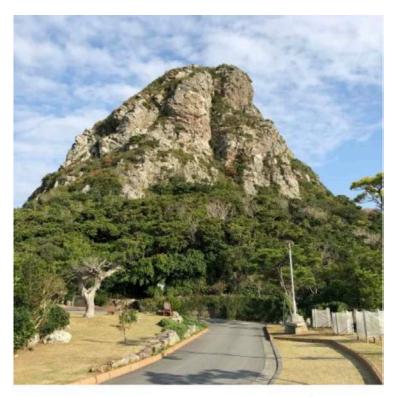
Both experienced and beginner divers will enjoy the many underwater charms of Minna-Jim, with its lagoon, colorful fish and coral reef

#### Beyond the beach

When the kids have had their fill of sand-in-your-toes time, head to Sesoko Beach Marine Club. Here, you'll find plenty of speed-loving, wind-in-your-hair options: Hop on a banana boat (ages 6–60) or a floating "biscuit" (ages 8+), rent a jetski, or soar at the height of a 13-story building on a parasailing adventure (ages 4+). If you're looking for slower-paced thrills, you can try sea walking – a guided stroll across the seabed wearing underwater helmets – without even having to take off your glasses.

The tropical waters surrounding the island are renowned for their unspoiled reefs, so diving and snorkeling are a must. On a dive at Club Axis daring divers can touch sea cucumbers, play among clouds of reef fish and explore unique formations, including peeking at lobsters in "Sesoko labyrinth" – a network of narrow underwater tunnels and crevasses where filtered sunlight creates an eerie blue underwater world.

If you haven't gotten your fill of dive sites around Sesoko, hop over to neighboring Minna-Jima. This croissant-shaped island has a tranquil lagoon and a mass of hard corals and visible seabeds, offering plenty of sites for experienced and beginners alike. Among the garden eels and turtles, often seen here, kids will love the sight of all the "Nemos" (clownfish) and "Dorys" (blue tang), flapping their fins around them.



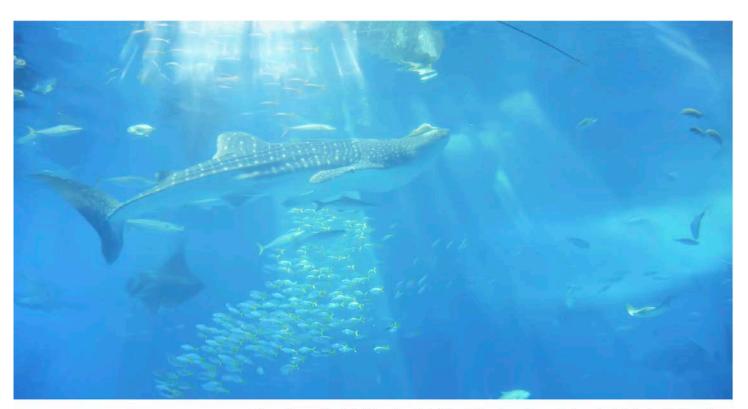
For more land-based activities head inland to Mount Gusuku, which offers spectacular views over the entire island

#### Into the wild

If you prefer more inland adventures, Sesoko offers plenty of nature hikes and tours. Local adventure firm Umiyukui specializes in family trekking trips for people of all ages, including threegeneration family holidays. From river trekking to waterfalls and sea kayaking through mangroves and forest hiking, all adventures are geared with all age groups in mind, so you don't have to worry about anyone getting tired and being left behind.

Adventurous types will be happy to know they can also conquer the peak that's visible from Sesoko Beach — Mount Gusuku or Tacchu, as the locals know it. Located on lejima (le Island), Mount Gusuku is a 30-minute ferry ride from Motobu Port in Okinawa. Once there, a short, steep climb to the top will reward you with stunning 360-degree views over the island and turquoise seas beyond.

If hiking is not your thing, lejima still makes for a great day trip. The area is known for its immaculate beaches, flower fields and caves, like Nyatiya-gama, which is used by locals as a fertility shrine and served as a bomb shelter during WWII. There's also the rare chance to spot fields of Japanese Black Cattle, which is used to make lejima Beef, a kind of Wagyu. For those craving something less exotic, head over for burgers at the 40-year-old diner, Ace Burger.



Okinawa Churaumi, located at Ocean Expo Park, is Japan's biggest aquarium, and is home to whale sharks, dolphins and more

#### Back onthe mainland

Visiting Okinawa from Sesoko is easy thanks to a 700-meter bridge that links the two. In under 15 minutes, visitors will be able to enjoy some of the main attractions on the neighboring Motobu Peninsula on Okinawa Island.

For families with little ones, Ocean Expo Park — a legacy of the 1975 World Expo — is a must-see. The star of the park is Okinawa Churaumi, Japan's biggest and best-known aquarium, where you can marvel at whale sharks in the world's largest tank, watch dolphin or manatee shows and explore undersea science at the Aqua Lab. Other highlights include Emerald Beach (one glimpse of the glittering waters explains its name), a display of more than 20,000 orchids at Tropical Dream Centre botanical gardens, and Motobu Genki Village, where kids of all ages can swim with dolphins.

In and around Motobu Town, take in the culture that's unique to this group of Japanese islands. At Sesokojima Mymy Sisa in Motobu Town, crafty types can paint their own miniature shisa — lion-dog guardians from Okinawan mythology — and at the Native Okinawa Village visitors can take a peek at recreations of houses from the 17th to the 19th centuries, while learning more about the ancient Ryukyu Kingdom and local way of life.

Nakijin Castle, now a World Heritage Site, gives history lovers the chance to go back further in time with ruins dating back to the 1300s. Finally, those visiting Nakijin in February will have the added bonus of seeing hundreds of Hikan cherry trees blossom.



Besides beaches, Okinawa offers the chance to experience botanical gardens, castles, ancient ruins and tropical local flora



#### **Beach reads**

History buffs will love Okinawa:
The History of an Island People, a fascinating troop through the history of the Ryukyu islands from 1314 AD to WWII. If you're more of a fiction fan, try In the Woods of Memory or The Yokota Officers Club, which are both set on these islands after the war.



#### What to pack

Tropical temperatures call for light and airy resort wear with an extra layer for the evening breeze. For those wanting to take advantage of the clear waters around Sesoko, divers will definitely want their PADI certification. Bring snorkel masks and sandals to protect your feet from rocks.



#### **Essential listening**

Get a taste of the local sound by checking out Okinawan singer and sanshin player Yasukatsu Oshima on Spotify. There are dozens of podcasts about Japanese travel and culture, too. Get knowledgeable with Japan Eats, History of Japan Podcast or Uncanny Japan.

#### Planning tip

If you tried to experience everything there is to do in and around Sesoko, you might need another vacation. So be sure to book a stay at the The Beach Resort Sesoko by Hilton Club when it opens to Club Members in 2022 and as soon as the Club Reservation window allows. While you're on your retreat, be sure to schedule some downtime to enjoy the resort swimming pool or one of the three exclusive restaurants at the nearby Hilton Okinawa Sesoko Resort.

If you'd rather relax in the comfort of your own room, The Beach Resort Sesoko will boast more than 100 studios and spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom suites with private balconies, so you can enjoy a glass of wine in your plush robe, while gazing at the beaches of northern Okinawa's Sesoko Island.



# A New Coastal Paradise Awaits

Hilton Grand Vacations adds Mexico to its destination line-up



Situated along the Sea of Cortez, La Pacifica Los Cabos by Hilton Club beckons beach lovers with dramatic ocean views and relaxing tropical vibes. Here you can explore 11.3 acres of beachfront ready for swimming, or visit nearby restaurants and shopping outlets in San Jose Del Cabo and Cabo San Lucas. A breathtaking escape awaits when you add this sun-kissed vacation destination to your travel list.

Start a new vacation story in beautiful Los Cabos.

To explore ownership options, call 800 - 505 - 863





#### Maximise Your Membership

Here at Hilton Grand Vacations, we know owning a timeshare can change the way you vacation, for the better. That's why we want you to make the most of your Club membership, by maximizing your ClubPoints and taking advantage of the fantastic offers we have available. Here we share our best tips on how to get the most out of your membership before the year ends.

#### Plan, plan, plan

Most HGV properties have nine- and six-month Club Reservation windows. By booking your next trip in advance, you can have time to save and start planning for upcoming costs, such as airfares. Also, take advantage of current availability in high-demand destinations like Hawaii and New York, and plan early to ensure you get your desired dates in 2021.

#### Get booking

It's worth familiarizing yourself with the Club website, so you know how to reduce booking fees when making a reservation. And if you need to speak to someone for assistance, our experienced and friendly Club Counselors can guide you through the process.

This year, Club is taking the extraordinary step of saving all unused 2020 ClubPoints for all Members at no cost. So if you have not traveled yet, make sure you book a stay at an HGV Club resort. (Tip: Using your ClubPoints toward an HGV Club resort reservation always delivers the best value for your Points.) If you are ready to make a reservation today, simply go online and save your unused 2020 Points, also at no cost. And remember, you can always borrow Points from next year's allotment, too!

#### Watch education webinars

Educational videos and webinars are available on Club Navigator, covering topics from ClubPoints to Club Member updates. Be sure to check back regularly for new content. In the meantime, you can watch our most recent Club Member education webinars here.

#### New properties to look out for

As the year comes to a close, we're looking forward to exciting new additions to the HGV portfolio, spanning 2021 and beyond. Liberty Place Charleston by Hilton Club is set to open in Charleston, South Carolina, on June 1, 2021, bringing a stylish new accommodation option to those wanting to spend time in this iconic port city. Over in Hawaii, Maui Bay Villas by Hilton Grand Vacations marks HGV's expansion on the island of Maui and offers stunning beachfront suites alongside extensive amenities and recreational activities. Meanwhile on the Japanese island of Sesoko, The Beach Resort Sesoko by Hilton Club will offer Members the chance to experience tropical paradise, while luxuriating in spacious one-, two- and three-bedroom suites. And in Los Cabos, Mexico, Club Members will soon be able to experience the luxurious suites, exquisite dining experiences and stylish amenities of La Pacifica Los Cabos by Hilton Club when it opens in early 2021.



The new Maui Bay Villas by Hilton Grand Vacations promises exquisite design in a beautiful beachfront location (artist rendering; subject to change)

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## The Clubhouse

#### Happy to meet you



HGV Club Member Fallon S. has owned at Hilton Grand Vacations Orlando at Seaworld for three-and-a-half-years. This property is particularly special to her, because of its unmatched service. No matter where she is in the resort, Team Members are both welcoming and friendly. "Owning at HGV Seaworld has been a great experience, and I can't wait to return," she says.

#### The gift that keeps on giving

There's nothing quite so special as giving the gift of an HGV vacation to a loved one. Perhaps you have a family member who deserves a surprise getaway or maybe you're thinking of a surprise holiday with friends. Whatever the occasion, give the gift of a vacation by booking a reservation with your ClubPoints and applying a guest certificate for a friend or family member.

#### Your HGV by the Numbers

Today's COVID-19 world has made your travel experience a bit different this year, but we're always looking out for your safety and wellbeing, as evidenced by these numbers:



186,624

sanitizer packets placed in resort rooms\*



150

Virtual HGV association board meetings held during 2020



99,000

Disinfecting wipes handed out to guests across properties\*



215,250

Disposable masks given to guests staying with HGV\*



34%

Owners who have opted in to receive digital communications from HGV

#### **Best in Class**

HGV is proud to have partnered with Junior Achievement (JA) – an organization that helps young people make smart academic and economic choices – for its corporate social responsibility program, HGV Serves.

As part of the partnership, HGV Team Members in eight school districts across the United States (including Orlando, Myrtle Beach and New York) will have the opportunity to volunteer in their local communities. Through various JA programs, Team Members will teach the curriculum and share their own personal experiences with students. In doing so, they will transform key concepts and lessons into messages that inspire and empower aspiring professionals to believe in themselves, showing that they can make a difference in the world.

"A spirit of service has always been at the heart of Hilton Grand Vacations," said Mark Wang, president and CEO of Hilton Grand Vacations. "We are dedicated to giving back to the communities where we live and work, and a partnership with Junior Achievement gives our Team Members the incredible opportunity to serve their local communities and schools. We look forward to seeing our Team Members help fuel the boundless potential of young people this school year and for many years to come."

To book any of the above holidays or for more information, visit the Club website.

<sup>\*</sup>Estimate based on HGV purchases

# The Q&A

#### Beatrice Girelli





Beatrice Girelli, design director and co-founder of Indidesign, and the creative force behind Maui Bay Villas by Hilton Grand Vacations, shares with us how the design narrative brings the island's natural beauty and serene vibe to life in HGV's newest Hawaiian resort

#### What was the inspiration and design ethos of Maui Bay Villas by Hilton Grand Vacations?

The design of the interiors was developed with a modern Hawaiian aesthetic in mind and executed in a contemporary way to define a unique DNA for the property. The indoor-outdoor Hawaiian lifestyle, views and Maui's natural beauty served as the foundation for the design, giving us the ability to develop bespoke solutions directly inspired by the site. For example, we took full advantage of the beachfront location and the generous size of the units to maximize the location's untapped potential and create a private, upscale retreat that would connect the Club Members and guests with the unique setting of Maui and, more specifically, Kihei.



We start with research. We want to understand the location, its history and its essence. Then we understand the priorities and goals for the resort: What is the vision? How do we want guests to feel when they visit? After this, we dig in and start manipulating the space – space planning is at the foundation of the design process. Once we know where everything will live, we narrate. We craft an aesthetic that showcases a unique point of view, in this case, modern Hawaiian.

#### We tend to think of luxury properties like Maui Bay Villas as being comfortable, yet elegant and sophisticated. How do you balance the "comforts-of-home" feel with elegance?

The two concepts can complement each other and go hand-in-hand. Most people do not use professionals to design their homes and this is where the difference lies. Buying a nice piece of furniture is not the same as developing a holistic concept for a space. Design can be compelling, unique and comfortable at the same time. Our objective is to craft spaces that are cohesive, where every choice is developed with the next element in mind. This is how we create a common thread that provides substance and meaning to the experience.

We aim to deliver a "wow" factor to surprise guests, but make sure that the space feels comfortable and approachable at the same time. We also want to reinforce the notion that you have arrived at a special destination, but get the feeling that this is your home-away-from-home when you visit. The design should leave the guests longing for their next trip back and maybe even inspire them to bring home a few décor ideas.

#### How important is the physical location of Maui Bay Villas to the property's interior design?

Maui served as the foundation for the design - saturated sunset colors, the beauty of nature and its easy-living, serene vibe. The design mixes that together and reflects back on an organic elegance without a trace of pretension.

#### What materials did you use in the design, and what inspired you to choose them?

Mostly natural materials, such as wood, rattan and woven. We incorporated multiple carved elements executed in a modern way to add a subtly rich and layered feel, and created an art program focused on natural materials. All the furnishings are unique and created for this project - inspired by the motifs and colors that are characteristic of the Maui landscape, while employing contrasting colors and textures that visually connect to the landscape.



Suites at the soon-to-open





#### 48 hours in ... Carlsbad

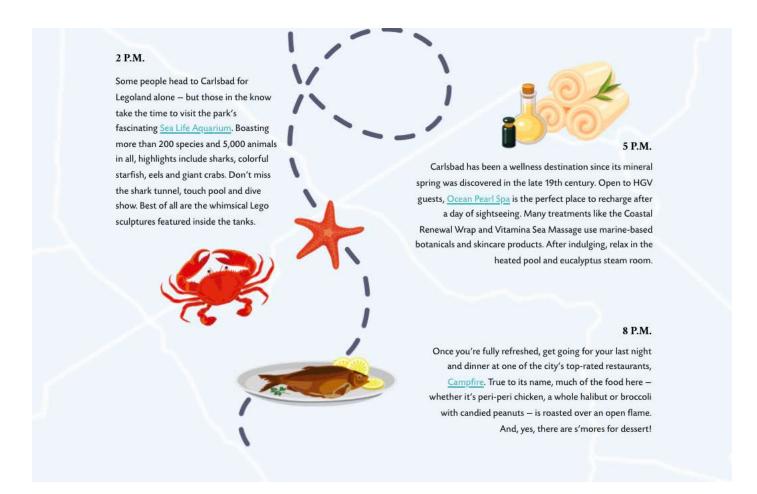
Celebrate the cooler months in Carlsbad by taking long bike rides along the coast, visiting art galleries and grabbing a table at some of California's finest outdoor dining spots



medium surf, this is a great spot for first-timers, as well as for families who prefer swimming, boogie boarding and lounging on the soft sand.

12 P.M.

Rinse off before grabbing lunch at Pizza Port Empire, a casual eatery that's a favorite with locals. Sit at picnic tables, play on vintage video game consoles and dig into one of their signature, loaded pies like the Carlsbad Pizza with pesto, mesquite grilled chicken, sundried tomatoes, artichoke hearts and feta cheese. There are also more than 50 rotating beers on tap, many of which come from local breweries.





As 2020 draws to a close, now is the time to start planning next year's vacation. What better way to see the world than by sea on a mid-size luxury cruise liner? With our very own ClubPartner Perks, this could be your ideal getaway next year.

Departing in September 2021, the 11-night Greece Intensive cruise aboard the Azamara Pursuit takes in some of Europe's top cities and iconic sights. Club Members can see the best of Greece, Turkey and Italy while enjoying the stylish staterooms, exquisite fine dining and personalized service for which the Azamara Pursuit is known.

Your vacation begins in the Greek capital city of Athens, the birthplace of Western civilization and the gateway to southern Europe's azure waters. Step aboard this stylish cruise liner to be greeted with a glass of champagne offered by a cheerful staff member who is already getting to know your name. With fewer than 800 passengers, the Pursuit is a mid-sized liner with state-of-the-art amenities, ensuring a boutique but luxurious feel to your epic adventure at sea.

Your first port of call is the idyllic island of Mykonos. Known for its vibrant nightlife, Mykonos also has a more serene side, and is home to avant-garde art galleries, family-run tavernas and laid-back rooftop bars. Take time to experience Mykonos like a local by seeking out the island's more secluded beaches, located to the north of the island. Or book onto one of the personalized day trips offered by Azamara, run by knowledgeable guides.

Back onboard the Pursuit, enjoy any of the five restaurants, relax on one of the eight passenger decks or unwind in the luxurious Sanctum Spa until you arrive at the next stop, Patmos. This charming Aegean island is known for its religious significance: Saint John wrote the Book of Revelation here, and there's a wonderful 11th century monastery dedicated to him in Hora, the island's capital.

From here, the cruise moves into Turkey, to the historical ancient city of Ephesus. Experience this once-formidable commercial trading port through a tour of its exquisitely restored ruins, where paved streets wind past ancient baths and grand town squares.

Your journey on the Pursuit cuts across the Mediterranean on its way back to Greece, taking in the islands of Rhodes and Santorini. On Rhodes, stroll to the old medieval town and browse the charming boutiques. In Santorini, spend the day exploring the dark-sand volcanic beaches, stopping for a lunch of freshly-grilled fish at a local taverna. Or spend the early evening enjoying an aperitif in the vibrant town center before your voyage departs at 8 p.m.



Take the day to hike the stunning blue and white-flecked hilltops of Santorini and breathe in the fresh Mediterranean Sea air

You'll also never be at a loss for things to do aboard the Pursuit. Get in a workout at the fitness center or go for a run on the outdoor jogging track. Guests can even book a number of exercise classes, including yoga and resistance training. And don't forget the outdoor pool and sundrenched lounge. Stretch out on a padded sunlounger with a cocktail or cool off with a fragranced face towel hand delivered to you by the pool staff.

Greece's islands are scattered across the Aegean, so it's just a short hop from Santorini to Crete, known for its idyllic white-sand beaches and emerald waters. Next on the agenda is Katakolon, where you can discover the home of Olympia, before cruising to the jaw-dropping island of Corfu, with its inviting beaches and bays and beautiful bougainvillea-lined laneways.

From here, enjoy time on the high seas, as the Pursuit makes its way to Italy, stopping in Sorrento before finishing in the eternal city of Rome. Prepare to be charmed by this vibrant Italian city, with its beautiful basilicas, ancient monuments and captivating historic center. It's the perfect grand finale to a truly unforgettable 11 nights at sea.

The Greece Intensive cruise aboard the Azamara Pursuit is expected to be one of our most popular trips of 2021, so be sure to secure a cabin today if you're interested. Wondering about your payment options? You can use current-year, Saved or borrowed ClubPoints and Bonus Points, cash or any combination of these to plan your next cruise.

#### Highlights of Israel

Why not add on a pre-voyage trip to Israel and experience the country's fascinating history and culture? Highlights of Isra is an overland journey stopping in Tel Aviv, Nazareth, as well as Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Yad Vashem and The Dead Sea. Any amount of Club, Bonus or Saved Points may be used toward the cost of the trip. Prices start at 10,000 ClubPoints + \$8,088 and include a flight to Athens, where the 11-night Greece Intensi cruise begins. Please note: This pricing is for the cruise portion of the trip only. Contact CruisesOnly at 1-888-492-6683 for pricing of the Highlights of Israeland journey excursion.

ClubPartner Perks cruise travel options are available through HGV Partner CruisesOnly. They include all major cruise lines and a best price guarantee commitment.



In Jerusalem, explore the Dome of the Rock, where the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, is believed to have risen to heaven

To book any of the above holidays or for more information, visit the Club website.



Whether you're looking for a great escape or seeking solace in nature, you can find it all in America's national parks. Explore towering mountain ranges, serene rivers and amazing hiking trails. Plan a horseback riding, camping or rafting trip at one of the many historical sites filled with natural beauty. The U.S. National Park System has something for every member of your family.

In the east, plan a trip to remember. Located within driving distance of Hilton Head, explore Congaree National Park by canoe and make memories fishing surrounded by this incredible hardwood forest. Make the short drive from Gatlinburg, Tennessee, to Mammoth Cave National Park to snap pictures of the world's largest cave and the beautiful fall foliage from the forests above.

Centrally located, national parks blend the beauty of nature and man-made design.

For the architecture buff, Hot Springs National Park features ancient thermal springs, historic bathhouses and amazing mountain views. Just a short distance away, look for places to stay in Hot Springs, Arkansas, or Branson, Missouri.

And for nature lovers that want it all, head west. Gaze with wonder at mountains carved by glaciers, feel the power of mother nature from natural geysers or find serenity in billion-year-old canyons. See how your family members measure up to the giant sequoias in Yosemite National Park and recharge in the evenings at nearby resorts in Yosemite or Lake Tahoe.

Fall back into vacation this season and discover the wonder of these national treasures.

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Click RCI Exchange Reservation followed by Access Your RCI Accou to link to your RCI Subscribing Member account

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