

# Club traveler

DREAM • PLAN • GO

INTRODUCING  
The New Club  
Member Website

Make the Most of  
Your Next City Trip

# ON THE TOWN &

CABO SAN LUCAS

CARRY-ON BAGS

WINE COUNTRY



 Hilton Grand Vacations Club





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What's your favorite activity on vacation? Tell us and send us your pictures to [feedback@clubtraveler.com](mailto:feedback@clubtraveler.com).





# traveler

DREAM • PLAN • GO

COVER STORY



## On the Town

Make the most of your next city trip

20

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## Travel Tip

Need more towels? Just text. Select Club resorts are using a new service called Kipsu that allows guests to make concierge requests via text message. Provide your mobile number at check-in and you'll receive a text message explaining how to use the service.

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# Dear Club Member



I'm excited to kick off our first issue of *Club Traveler* in 2016!

Last year we had so much to celebrate, including welcoming our 250,000th Club Member and opening Ocean 22, a spectacular new resort in Myrtle Beach, and Las Palmeras, our fourth resort in Orlando.

We have even more to look forward to this year, including three new resorts currently under construction—one on Hilton Head Island and two in Hawaii—and we're expanding our urban destinations with a new offering in Washington, D.C. Explore our cover story, which starts on page 20, with tips

to make the most of your next trip to a big city!

We're also working hard to launch new tools to enhance your Club experience. One of the most anticipated projects is the rollout of our new website. I hope you have already logged in and found it to be user friendly and full of helpful information to make your vacation planning fun and easy. Inside this issue on page 26, you'll read more about the new site so you can dive in and get comfortable.

We haven't forgotten you're often on the go, and we have an app for that! Watch for our soon-to-launch mobile app, designed to provide quick access to account and resort information in the palm of your hand.

Most importantly, we're always working with your needs in mind, so throughout this year you'll see opportunities to provide us your feedback. Please take the time to participate, because your vacation needs and desires are what drive us to bring you the most rewarding Club membership experience.

We're looking forward to an outstanding year ahead. Thank you for being with us on this journey!

Happy travels,

**Stan Soroka**  
Senior Vice President  
Club, Resort and Brand Services

## Introducing Las Palmeras

Orlando is one of the top travel destinations in America, so when an opportunity presented itself to grow our Orlando collection, we took it. Las Palmeras is joining the Club's three other resorts in Orlando, providing guests more ways to experience Florida's world-famous attractions. The resort is being renovated this year to add the top-class amenities and experience you expect from Hilton Grand Vacations, and will be ready for Club Members to visit in early 2017.



## Send Us Your Feedback!

What do you think about *Club Traveler*? Send us an email at [feedback@clubtraveler.com](mailto:feedback@clubtraveler.com).



## Hilton Grand Vacations Club

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# Dream

WHERE TO GO

Some of the most famous dive sites in Australia's Great Barrier Reef are Cod Hole, Ribbon Reefs and Osprey Reef.

## Dream Vacation

Club Member **Patty Prado**, an Owner at Hilton Grand Vacations Club on Paradise since 2002, tells us her dream vacation is to visit Australia. "I want to see its fabulous array of natural and man-made wonders, from Sydney Harbor and the Sydney Opera House to Uluru and the Great Barrier Reef."

Where to Stay: The **Hilton Cairns** hotel in Cairns, Australia, is the perfect base for exploring the diverse wonders of the region, including Australia's legendary Great Barrier Reef.

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# Plan Ahead

Schedule your next vacation around these exciting events



## Carolina Country Music Fest

Myrtle Beach, June 10–12

Country music rocks the Carolina coastline at this annual festival set on the Myrtle Beach boardwalk. It's a Club Member favorite and one of the few events where you can wear a cowboy hat and a pair of flip-flops. This year's lineup features more than 30 country music artists, including headliners Tim McGraw, Keith Urban and Florida Georgia Line. Visit [carolinacountrymusicfest.com](http://carolinacountrymusicfest.com) for tickets.

## ClubPartner Perk Grand Adventure to Hawaii

Honolulu, July 23–30

Get ready to visit four spectacular islands in one incredible vacation. This 7-night, round-trip tour of the Hawaiian Islands sets sail from Honolulu aboard Norwegian Cruise Line's luxurious *Pride of America* and will allow Club Members to explore legendary beaches, lush rainforests, historic landmarks and much more. Visit [hgvcpartner.com](http://hgvcpartner.com) for rates and information about how to book.

## Shanghai Disneyland Opens

Shanghai, June 16

The happiest place on earth is heading to mainland China. Like the Magic Kingdom in Orlando, Shanghai Disneyland will feature six themed lands, but Disney officials promise distinctly Chinese experiences and many unique attractions, such as a revitalized Tomorrowland, making it a highly anticipated vacation destination for Chinese guests, Disney lovers and travelers from all over the world.

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## National Park Service Turns 100

August 25

Happy 100th birthday, U.S. National Park Service! The national park system has been called "America's best idea," and the agency that oversees it celebrates its centennial this year. Nearly all national parks, from Acadia to Zion, will be hosting outdoor events and celebrations throughout the year, including on the Park Service's official birthday, August 25, when they're all free to enter.





# Painted Places

10 uncommon art exhibits from around the world

## 1. Les Carrières de Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence, France

This former quarry hosts multimedia art shows projected onto rock structures. The multisensory exhibit features 70 video projectors and 3D audio, shrouding visitors with imagery and sound.

## 2. Millennium Park in Chicago, Illinois

Chicago's 24.5-acre park features classical music concerts, uncommon landscape design and the futuristic Jay Pritzker Pavilion designed by architect Frank Gehry. The art-filled park is also home to the Cloud Gate sculpture, better known as "The Bean."

## 3. Venice Experimental Cinema and Performance Art Festival in Venice, Italy

Plan a late summer visit to the Palazzo Cà Zanardi to see live performances and video art screenings and mingle with the artists.

## 4. DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts

Wander through 30 acres of outdoor sculptures and gardens on the shores of Flint's Pond.

## 5. Canyon Road in Santa Fe, New Mexico

More than 100 galleries, studios and boutiques—many highlighting Native American and folk art—line this famous art district.

## 6. Banksy Walking Tour in Bristol, England

Take a walking tour of some of the earliest known works of Banksy, the anonymous English graffiti artist who in the 1980s tagged his hometown with satirical, dark humor stencils.

## 7. Southbank Promenade in Melbourne, Australia

This sculpture-dotted walkway stretches along the southern banks of the Yarra River. Nearby you'll find the Melbourne Arts Centre, National Gallery of Victoria and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

## 8. Central Souk (Blue Souk) in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Housed in an opulent landmark, this market features more than 600 vendors selling an eclectic mix of locally crafted oriental carpets and gold jewelry.

## 9. Kamberg Rock Art Centre in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

View more than 40,000 spiritual San Bushman rock art images during a three-hour walking tour at this World Heritage Site.

## 10. Red Tree Gallery in Cincinnati, Ohio

Visit with locals, sip a latte and gaze at jewelry, paintings, photography and paper crafts from budding artists at this bustling gallery/coffee shop combo.

Club Member Kathy Smith shared her memories of Les Carrières de Lumières:

"We walked into the limestone mountain and were stunned by the most beautiful immersion into the masterpieces of Raphael, Michelangelo and da Vinci, glowing and changing on the immense white galleries above and below. I was dwarfed in the dark hearing the symphonic music and just started crying at the beauty that you seem to be a part of as you walk around. Now at every opportunity, I tell everyone to try to see it, as this was one of the most amazing experiences of my life."



# Cabo San Lucas

Once a sleepy, remote fishing port, Cabo San Lucas is now one of Mexico's most popular resort destinations. Travelers to Cabo will find numerous outdoor activities, from deep-sea fishing to horseback riding. It's also one of the best places in the world to play golf. By night, Cabo is a happening party city with energetic nightclubs and delicious dining. Cabo's most distinctive landmark is a rock formation known as El Arco (The Arch) that juts three stories out of the sea. For the best views, summon a water taxi from the marina to take you to Lover's Beach.





## Where to Stay

Club Members can use Points to stay at **Fiesta Americana Villas Los Cabos**, located in the exclusive Cabo del Sol area and just a short drive from Cabo San Lucas. This stunning resort overlooks the Sea of Cortés and features an innovative spa, several swimming pools, a championship golf course, numerous on-site restaurants and much more.



# London Calling

Your guide to visiting the capital of England

London's famous clock tower, nicknamed Big Ben, is officially known as Elizabeth Tower.

## What to See

Sightseeing opportunities abound in London, from Buckingham Palace to Big Ben to Hyde Park. Club Member Nadean Dickey, who visits London frequently, says don't miss **Westminster Abbey**, the Gothic church where many royal weddings have taken place, including Prince William's marriage to Kate Middleton.

## Where to Get a Pint

London is known for its charming pubs, and one of the best is **The Andover Arms** in Hammersmith. This traditional English pub famous for its friendly staff serves delicious English dishes like steak pies and battered fish and chips, along with local favorite Fuller's beers.

## Where to Shop

Dickey says **Harrods** is "always a must!" Located on Brompton Road near the Knightsbridge station, the luxury department store is one of London's most popular attractions, featuring seven floors and 330 departments. Even if you can't afford a \$10,000 box of chocolates, Harrods is still worth visiting for the window-shopping.

## How to Get Around

London's subway, the Tube, is by far the easiest and cheapest way to get around the city. Dickey recommends ordering an **Oyster Card**, a smartcard used to pay for travel on public transport. Travelers can order a Visitor Oyster Card before they leave for London on the web at **visitbritain.com**.

## Where to Stay

**Hilton London Green Park**, located in Mayfair next to Berkley Square, offers a fantastic Central London location, perfect for sightseeing. In 2016, Club Members can enjoy exclusive rates on single and deluxe guest rooms and townhouse-style suites, starting at 1,050 Points per night. Contact a Club Counselor to request reservations.



# Plan

HOW TO GET THERE



The Scottish Highlands are home to a number of historic castles, including Inverness Castle, which overlooks the River Ness near the site of the original Inverness Castle from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

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## Ask the Resort

It is hard to imagine a more relaxing and picturesque vacation than a trip to the Scottish countryside. Hilton Grand Vacations Club at Dunkeld is nestled on a splendid wooded estate in Perthshire, the Gateway to the Highlands, about one hour from Edinburgh and Glasgow. We asked Margaret Cameron, the resort's lodge and estate manager, what sets Dunkeld apart from other Club resorts.

"We are what I would call a boutique resort, as we only have 22 lodges and we are not building any more due to strict planning rules. We sit on 280 acres of land with a salmon river running through, have a clay shooting range and can arrange for a Land Rover experience. There are 25 golf courses nearby, which include championship courses such as St. Andrews, 'the home of golf,' and Gleneagles."





# Carried Away

Travel writer Larry Olmsted reveals best bets for carry-on bags

In the age of checked luggage fees, your carry-on bag may be one of your most valuable travel accessories. Unfortunately, the rules regarding carry-on bags aren't always clear, and many bags labeled "carry-on" by the manufacturer may not actually fit in the overhead bin.

To make matters worse, the airlines are starting to crack down on carry-on size limits. Most U.S. airlines typically allow carry-on bags that are 22 inches long by 14 inches wide by 9 inches high, though Southwest and Alaska airlines allow slightly larger bags. It is important to note that this includes any protruding handles, wheels or pockets.

Travelpro has long been the carry-on of choice for the world's most frequent fliers: pilots and cabin crew. Its new Platinum Magna 2 22-inch rollaboard packs maximum capacity

into the acceptable carry-on limits and offers top-notch construction and features like a built-in garment holder with removable folding board.

Rollaboard cases are popular because they roll easily and protect your belongings, but they are often the hardest to fit in overheads. Softer bags, like duffels, compress and can be squished into bins. A great hybrid option is the EC Lync from renowned luggage and travel solution manufacturer Eagle Creek. A combination duffel bag/backpack, it has a removable wheeled frame that folds into a tiny package,

making it a sturdy rolling bag that maximizes storage and packs easily on the plane.

For your personal items, it is hard to beat the backpack line from Ivar, widely available from Amazon and other online retailers. Ivar's big innovation is its patented "Shelf System," a ladder-like series of interior dividers. The snug spots store everything from your laptop to your camera and make them super accessible and convenient for clearing airport security.

If you need to travel with dress clothes such as a dinner jacket in your carry-on, you won't find a better system than the proprietary "Suit Packing System" from manufacturer Lat\_56 (sold direct online). This crease-free insert rolls up your clothing in a textile garment bag sleeve with a torso-shaped hanger that was designed in consultation with Saville Row tailors. It's small, light, does a great job fighting wrinkles, and can be placed inside a wide variety of carry-ons.



## Zip It Up

Your luggage is only as good as its zippers. One faulty zipper can render the whole bag useless. When shopping for luggage, be sure to look for the letters YKK on the zippers. YKK is a Japanese company widely considered to make the most reliable zippers in the world.



SHARE  
YOUR TIPS

Do you have a favorite packing tip or a beloved piece of luggage? We'd love to hear about it. Email your luggage tips and recommendations to [feedback@clubtraveler.com](mailto:feedback@clubtraveler.com), and we may feature them in an upcoming issue of *Club Traveler*.



# Air Supply

News and resources to make travel easier

## Plane Cool

These airlines make flying even more fun with entertaining airplane themes.

**WestJet** flies a *Frozen*-themed plane that features beloved characters Anna and Elsa on the exterior and snowflake designs inside.

**All Nippon Airways**, a Japanese carrier, has decorated some of its jets to look like *Star Wars* droids R2-D2 and BB-8 and screens the movies in-flight.

**Air New Zealand**, the “official airline of Middle Earth,” has emblazoned several of its planes with characters from *The Lord of the Rings* films.

**EVA Air**, a Taiwanese airline, flies Hello Kitty-adorned airplanes between Taipei and Houston and provides passengers with Hello Kitty pillows.



## Tag Along

Get ready to tag your own luggage. One of the next big changes coming to the airline travel experience is that passengers will tag their suitcases themselves with labels containing flight information and final destination rather than handing their bags to an airline agent. Tagging your own bags is already common in Europe, and it has recently started to appear in the United States. American Airlines provides self-tagging kiosks in a number of U.S. airports, while other airlines such as Alaska let passengers print their luggage tags at home. Some airlines are even developing digital tags that can be attached to luggage and remotely updated with flight information.

## Fixer-Upper

One of America’s airports is getting a billion-dollar makeover. In late 2015, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced plans to transform LaGuardia Airport into a modern, 21st-century transportation hub. Proposed components include a unified terminal that will replace the four existing terminals, increased taxiway space to cut down on flight delays, expanded transportation services connecting travelers to the city, and a larger security check-in area that will reduce security wait times. The first half of the project should open to travelers in 2019, and it will be completed in 2021.

## Senior Trip

Airports can be stressful places for anyone, but they can be especially challenging for seniors. To help senior travelers make their flights, airports allow a non-traveling companion to escort seniors to and from their gate, as long as they show proper ID. If a wheelchair is needed, be sure to request one when booking the flight. Some airlines, such as Southwest, provide a form to do this on their website, but it will be worth the effort to call and speak to an airline agent. At security, the TSA does not require passengers who are more than 75 years old to remove their shoes or outerwear. And be sure to take advantage of the pre-boarding segment for passengers with special needs, which will give seniors more time to reach their seats and get settled in.



## Get More HawaiianMiles

Got Bonus Points? Convert them to HawaiianMiles. During the month of April, Hawaiian Airlines will add a 20 percent bonus when Club Members convert their Bonus Points to HawaiianMiles. Confirm your HawaiianMiles account, then contact a Club Counselor to complete your request.



# Let the Sunshine In

Shutterbug Angela Tague shares tips for taking photos of sunrises and sunsets

Every day of vacation begins and ends with spectacular views of the sun. Capture stunning pictures of these magical moments with these photography tips.



### Check the timing.

Know exactly when the sun will rise and set by consulting a local weather report or downloading a sunrise and sunset app to your smartphone.

### Shoot continuously.

Second by second, you'll notice subtle changes in the sky. Shoot several frames and revel in the moment. Later, delete unwanted digital images or use photo-editing software to gently adjust the exposures.

### Split into thirds.

Create contrast by including land and sky in the camera frame. The rule of thirds works well. Try two-thirds sky, one-third land to amplify the colorful scene.

### Use a tripod.

As the sky darkens during sunset, it takes longer for your camera to record the brilliance.

A tripod adds stability to exposures longer than 1/60 of a second.

### Find unique spots.

Not all sunsets vanish into the ocean or between mountain peaks. Scout scenic photo ops during the day where you can later capture unique photos.

### Choose your settings.

For crisp images, opt for a low ISO (shutter speed) such as 200 or 400 and use the Av (aperture priority) mode to control the light entering the camera. An aperture of f2.8 or f4.0 creates lighter, pastel images by allowing ample light into the camera. Apertures of f16 or f22 will yield darker, saturated colors.

## Fine Print

Yes, you can still print! Here are three ways:

**Online:** Get classic chemically printed images on photo paper that lasts forever from an online lab such as Shutterfly or Snapfish.

**At Home:** Use an Epson or Canon home printer fitted with pigment-based inks and paper to create images lasting 65+ years.

**In Camera:** Instant-print cameras are back! Print paper pics within minutes of clicking a Fujifilm Instax or Polaroid Snap camera.



# Charge Me Not

Clever ways to avoid paying airline fees

Airlines now charge a number of fees that were once bundled into your ticket price. Last year, the airline industry worldwide collected a record \$60 billion from these “ancillary fees,” which include everything from checked luggage to ticket changes to in-flight snacks. While some fees are unavoidable, you may be able to save money by flying smart.

**Be loyal.** The most comprehensive way for semi-regular fliers to avoid ancillary fees is to stick tightly to flying on one carrier and become a top-tier member of its loyalty program. Depending on the airline, loyalty program members typically get free checked bags, free bags for travel companions (up to eight!), early boarding, premium seats and, for high-level members, no charge for changing flights. You can often avoid food and drink fees through free upgrades to first class.

**Get an airline card.** If you don't fly enough to earn elite status, consider an airline

branded credit card, which usually gets you free checked baggage and priority boarding. Most airline credit cards have introductory specials that waive the cost for a year and often award enough bonus miles at sign-up to earn a free ticket.

**Carry on.** The simplest way to beat checked baggage fees is to stick to carry-on luggage. Each traveler in your party can often stow one free bag in the overhead bin and a second personal item under the seat in front of them. Also, most airlines charge more for a second checked bag,

so even if you need to check, try to keep it to one piece. Another option is to fly Southwest, which is the last remaining U.S. airline to include free checked luggage (up to two bags per person).

**Bring your own food.** The TSA prohibits liquid or gel-like food items such as soups and dressings, but you can still pack whole fruits and some packaged foods. Apples, string cheese, granola and pretzels fit easily in your carry-on bags. (Check regulations for

international flights as they may differ.) Additionally, many airports now offer water bottle filling stations, so carry an empty bottle that you can take through security.

**Check in early.** Selecting your seats in advance is one of the toughest fees to beat, leaving you faced with the choice of paying a fee (\$9 to \$40 each way) or taking your chances, which often means getting assigned

a middle seat near the back. Most airlines stop charging these fees once check-in begins, so check in as early as possible for the best seat selection.

**Pre-purchase Wi-Fi.** Before you travel, check to see which Internet service is offered on your flight. If it's GoGo, you can save money, as much as half the price, by purchasing a day pass in advance from the GoGo website, rather than buying Wi-Fi on the plane. And if you don't use the pass, it's good for a year, so you can use it later.





# Go

## WHAT TO DO

Amsterdam is the cycling capital of the world. Stay at the DoubleTree by Hilton Amsterdam Central Station, and explore the city by bike using the hotel's in-house bicycle rental service.

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### Local Perspective

Club Members who will be cruising along the Rhine River on the 2016 ClubPartner Perk Grand Adventure in October will receive a complimentary one-day Hop-On, Hop-Off bus pass to explore Amsterdam before the cruise sets sail. To help make the most of this experience, we asked Amsterdam resident Brittanie Shey for advice on the best stop. She recommends Museum Square.

"The Rijksmuseum is my favorite tourist attraction in Amsterdam. It has everything from the Dutch classics, including Rembrandt, to modern art, including a wing dedicated to 20th-century photography. It's easy to spend the entire day there. The building itself is gorgeous, and it's at the head of a large grassy park that also includes the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk Museum."



# Tongue Thai'd

What you can expect to eat in Thailand

Thai food is broad, varied and not easy to generalize. But if there is one underlying theme, it is complexity. There are few one-ingredient dishes and no equivalent of a steak or roast chicken. Layered and carefully combined flavors with lots of fresh herbs and spices are the essence of Thai cooking, and most recipes contain at least three of the five basic tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter and spicy.

Menus are also complex, and most meals are served family-style with a variety of shared dishes. Since such meals are served in one array, there is no real appetizer category in Thailand. What many foreigners perceive as classic Thai starters, such as meat satays or spring rolls, are street foods in Thailand meant to be enjoyed between meals.

Thai food is regional and influenced by neighboring countries, so the cuisine of Northern Thailand, which is less commonly seen in the U.S., has much in common with Cambodia, Vietnam and China's Yunnan region. Southern Thai

food, more popular in the U.S., has more in common with Indian and Indonesian cuisine, featuring curries and coconut milk.

In general, Thai cuisine relies on fresh herbs, spices and pungent ingredients, such as garlic, cilantro, lemongrass, kaffir lime, fish sauce and hot peppers. As in most Asian cuisines, rice is an important staple, but Thai cooking also makes extensive use of noodles, both thick and thin. Perhaps the most popular dish is Pad Thai, usually called Phat Thai in its homeland, a combination of broad rice noodles with many seasonings, which can include tamarind, fish sauce, dried shrimp and peppers, along with egg, tofu, peanuts and often a meat or fish protein.

Other common Thai dishes include curries (especially green curry chicken), fried rice, pork or beef satays (meat grilled on skewers with a peanut paste), spring rolls, Tom Yum Goong (a traditional spicy shrimp soup), Som Tum (a spicy papaya salad) and stir-fried pork with fresh basil.

Bangkok is a melting pot where all regional styles of Thai food, as well as plenty of street food options, are available, offering visitors one-stop shopping. Cooking schools and classes are also very popular with tourists visiting Thailand, and many offer a full-day experience that includes shopping for ingredients at a market with the instructor before learning how to use them in the kitchen.

## Where to Stay in Thailand

Club Members can visit Thailand through the Club's affiliation with Anantara Vacation Club, whose five-star resorts provide rich cultural experiences and exotic settings. Use ClubPoints, Bonus Points or Saved Points to request reservations at Anantara Vacation Club Resorts in Bangkok, Phuket and Koh Samui. For more information or to request a reservation, contact a Club Counselor.



# Play Time

An inside look at what's in the kids' room at Parc Soleil

There's always something exciting to do on vacation, whether it's visiting a zoo or riding roller coasters at a theme park. And the fun doesn't stop when you're back at the resort. Many Hilton Grand Vacations Club resorts contain a kids' center full of games and other activities. To get an idea of some of the excitement offered for kids, we asked the kids' center coordinators at Parc Soleil by Hilton Grand Vacations Club to share some of the activities kids can enjoy while staying at the resort.

## Board Games

Kids of all ages love to play games, and the Parc Soleil kids' center has all the classics: Candy Land, Chutes and Ladders, Hungry Hungry Hippos, Don't Break the Ice and just about every other game you can think of.

## Arts and Crafts

Get ready to get your hands dirty. At the kids' center, youngsters can pull up to an arts and crafts table where coordinators will help them draw with crayons and markers, paint watercolors and even design their own T-shirts.

## Interactive Floor

Toddlers staying at Parc Soleil have a blast playing with images projected onto the floor from a high-tech gizmo in the ceiling. Fireworks, soccer balls, animals and other shapes react to kids' touches as they giggle and romp around on the floor.

## Pucker Powder

What could make all these activities more fun? A machine filled with powdered candy. The Pucker Powder tower in Parc Soleil's kids' room dispenses 12 flavors of brightly colored powder.





LONG WEEKEND

# Grape Expectations

3 days in California's wine country

Wine grapes grow best in beautiful places with great weather—iconic destinations such as the South of France and Italy's Tuscan countryside. California's adjacent Napa and Sonoma counties, home to some of the most famous vineyards in the New World, are less than an hour from San Francisco and are exceptional tourist destinations, featuring fantastic restaurants, spas, world-class golf and wineries of every shape and style.





### Day 1

Start your trip with a tasting. In the charming town of St. Helena, you'll find a huge castle-style building that's home to the nation's leading school for professional chefs, the Culinary Institute of America's Greystone Campus. Visitor attractions include an enormous culinary bookstore, retail shop, two restaurants, and the nation's only oleoteca, a high-tech olive oil tasting bar. Here the finest extra-virgin oils are protected from light and oxygen and dispensed on tap, like draught beer. Tasting options include slates of oil with cheese, charcuterie and wine, a gourmet experience you cannot find anywhere else.

### Day 2

Get to know wine country. In Sonoma's largest city, Santa Rosa, spend a portion of your day at Railroad Square, a walking-friendly neighborhood surrounding an 1870s-era train, with nearly 20 restaurants and cafés. From here, take Route 12 into Napa, passing through the picturesque towns of Kenwood, Glen Ellen and Sonoma itself, whose main square features many tasting rooms, providing the rare opportunity to enjoy the wine country experience on foot. It's not far to the town of Napa and its Oxbow Public Market, a food hall full of local artisan food stalls, sit-down eateries and gourmet shopping.

### Day 3

Enjoy the area's natural attractions. Napa Valley is home to the famous Calistoga Spa Hot Springs, where you can splurge on a spa treatment or buy a day pass and soak in one of several mineral pools that range from 80 to 104 degrees Fahrenheit. Nearby is the Old Faithful Geyser of California, a small geyser that erupts about every 30 minutes, not to be confused with its more famous namesake in Yellowstone. Also nearby is the Petrified Forest, where a self-guided nature trail takes you past giant redwood trees turned to stone 3.5 million years ago.



### Where to Stay

**Hilton Sonoma Wine Country** is located just off U.S. Route 101, about 65 miles from San Francisco and Oakland airports. The hotel, set on 13 lush acres, overlooks the beautiful Russian River Valley and is surrounded by more than 300 wineries and vineyards.







An aerial night view of a city skyline, likely New York City, with a large body of water in the background. The city lights are visible, and the sky is a deep blue. The text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

Bright  
Lights,

# BIG ADVENTURES

Outstanding travel opportunities abound in big cities, but learning how to navigate them and get the most out of your visit can be a challenge. Travel writer **Calvin Hennick** reveals how to plan the perfect urban escape.





**D**odge elbows in Times Square as you rush to get to the theater on time. Bask in the majesty of the Lincoln Memorial at night and turn to see the Washington Monument mirrored in the reflecting pool behind you.

Now catch your breath.

City trips are often exhilarating, leaving you energized in spite of the constant hustle and bustle (or perhaps because of it). But they can also feel overwhelming, with too much to do, too many sites to see, and too many secrets to unlock before you have to return home. With a little preparation, though, you can tame even the most daunting metropolis.

**Get Yourself Oriented**

Most large cities that attract tourists have at least one “hop-on, hop-off” bus line. Though more expensive than taxis, they’re often the perfect option for that first day when you’re still learning a new city’s basic geography. The buses stop at the city’s main tourist attractions, and often include live or recorded audio narration in a variety of languages. Also, the buses are usually double-decker with an open-air top, giving you better views of your surroundings than you’d see by car.

To get beyond the tourist trail, follow the locals and use public transportation to get around. In most cities, public bus

lines are somewhat slow (with routes and schedules that are borderline indecipherable to newcomers), so stick to the trains if you can. For just a couple of dollars, you can whoosh from the shops on Canal Street to the carnival rides at Coney Island on the New York City subway, or from the U.S. Capitol to Arlington National Cemetery on the D.C. Metro.

Subway trains can be tricky, though. The best way to learn is to grab a subway map or install the local subway app on your smartphone, and hop on. Find a friendly local who can explain the finer points of transfers and express stops. You’ll be a pro in no time.

**See the Right Sites**

It’s your first time in New York, and you want to see the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty and Times Square. You also plan to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art, take in a Knicks game, and walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. And then there’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the Museum of Modern Art, the Apollo Theater, and ... the list goes on.

The fact is, you probably won’t be able to do it all, and you’ll only exhaust yourself trying. Instead of checking every attraction off your list,

SKY NOIR PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL DICKINSON/GETTY IMAGES





pick two or three “musts” and build your trip around them.

Even if you have a good idea of what you want to do, a little extra research before you leave can save you time and money. Purchasing tickets in advance can sometimes help you skip lines, and many cities have deals that bundle several attractions together for a reduced price. You may also discover deals like free museum days and discounted theater tickets.

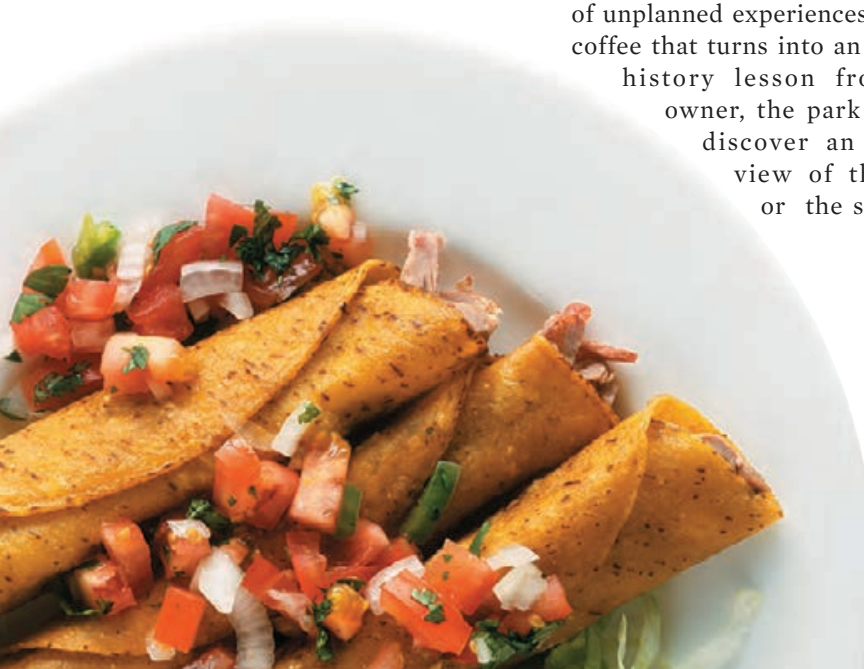
### Dine Around Town

Start with the signatures. No visit to New York City is complete until a slice of pizza has been folded in half.

Next, hunt out local haunts and ethnic enclaves—places that will add unique flavor to your trip—rather than falling back on familiar chains. Washington, D.C., is home to some of the best Ethiopian restaurants outside of Africa.

A good recommendation is important. Locals will often suggest tourist spots or the priciest option they can think of, rather than the places they love the best. To get a straight answer, don't ask which restaurants you should try. Instead, ask them where they eat most often.

A good city guidebook can also be a useful resource for finding restaurants that you'd otherwise walk right past. And when all else fails, the aggregated wisdom of the cuisine crowd is only a click or two away on websites and apps like Yelp and Urbanspoon.



## Get Appy

Download these apps before your next city trip:

### Google Translate

Trouble communicating abroad? Simply speak into the app and receive an instant audio translation. Sure, it can be awkward to have an entire conversation this way, but the app can be a lifesaver when asking for directions or ordering at a restaurant.

### Free Wi-Fi Finder

Sometimes in the middle of a long day in the city, you need a break to recharge your batteries (both literally and figuratively). This app scans for the nearest available free wireless hotspots, helping you find a place where you can get connected.

### MAPS.ME

While Google Maps is great for getting directions near home, many travelers rely on MAPS.ME because the app works offline. It functions worldwide, meaning you can navigate your way through cities in Europe and Asia without paying for an international data plan or searching for Wi-Fi.



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### Dive Deeper

If you're lucky, the best moments of your city vacation will blossom out of unplanned experiences: the cup of coffee that turns into an impromptu history lesson from a café owner, the park where you discover an incredible view of the skyline, or the spontaneous

decision to wander down a side street that leads to an entire day of adventure.

One way to find these moments is on foot. Pick a neighborhood that you want to learn more about, put away your map and just start walking. Pop into stores with quirky window displays. Talk to strangers. Stop and watch the street performers. Allow yourself to get lost for a while.

Or simply sit still and watch as the city passes you by. Pick a sunny day and pack a lunch, then set up camp in one of the world's famous green spaces—Washington, D.C.'s National Mall or New York's Central Park—and listen as the city tells you its stories. Who says urban travel can't be relaxing?



# Where to Stay

Club Members can use their Membership to stay at a number of urban resorts in great cities across the U.S. Explore an upscale, sophisticated experience through **Hilton Club**, Hilton Grand Vacations' lifestyle urban product.



## New York City

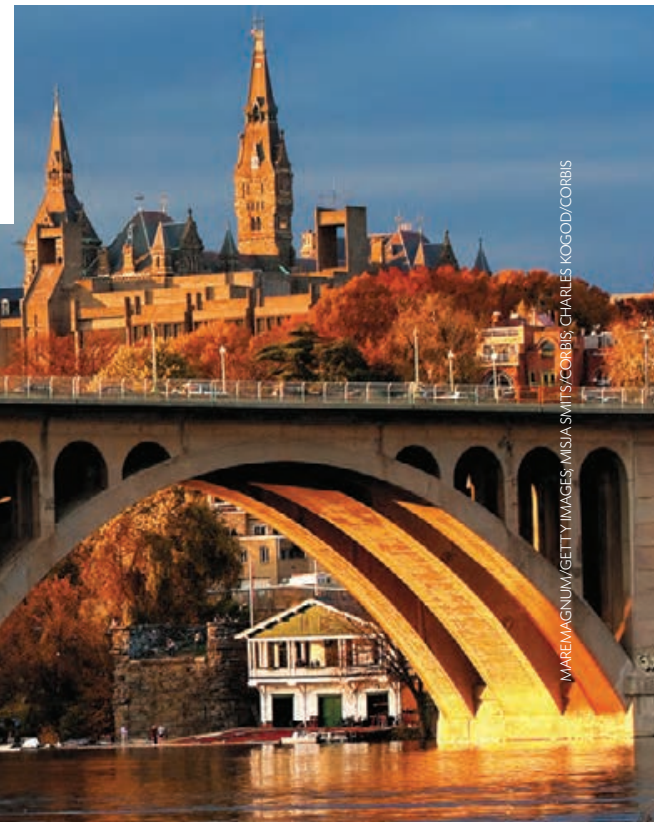
**West 57th Street by Hilton Club** offers Club Members an unforgettable New York City stay. It's located in the heart of midtown Manhattan within walking distance of many world-famous landmarks, including Rockefeller Center, Central Park and Fifth Avenue. Its spacious rooms are sleek and modern and offer close proximity to a number of nearby restaurants.

**The Residences by Hilton Club** is a brand-new offering currently under development in New York City. Located on the upper floors of the New York Hilton Midtown, these elegant studio and one-bedroom units feature classical design inspired by the glamorous past of the hotel's iconic penthouses, which once served as residences for the likes of John D. Rockefeller, John Lennon and Conrad Hilton.



## Washington, D.C.

**The District by Hilton Club** is set to become the first Club offering in Washington, D.C., located in the heart of the city between DuPont Circle and Georgetown. Embedded in the Embassy Suites by Hilton Washington D.C. Georgetown hotel, the newly renovated one- and two-bedroom units deliver sophisticated surroundings with access to all the city has to offer.





# Club

YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Sanibel Cottages Resort offers spacious two-bedroom condos with screened balconies and dramatic views of the Gulf of Mexico.



## Ask a Club Counselor

In each issue of *Club Traveler*, a Club Counselor will be answering questions about how the Club works. If you have a question you'd like to submit to a Club Counselor, email it to [feedback@clubtraveler.com](mailto:feedback@clubtraveler.com), and it may be answered in the next issue.

### What should I do to increase my chances of confirming a resort with limited availability?

Some of our Club resorts, including several properties in Southwest Florida, have limited availability. Your best chance at getting a reservation at a resort with limited availability is to call as soon as the reservation window opens for your desired travel dates, which is 276 days in advance of checkout. You may also want to try expanding your options and unit type preference to take advantage of any availability at the resort.

– **Shaun, Elite Club Counselor,**  
5+ years with Hilton Grand Vacations Club



# On the Web

Get to know the new Club Member website

Booking your next vacation just got a whole lot easier. Hilton Grand Vacations is unveiling a new online experience that's easier to use and navigate, with a modern design and fancy new features.

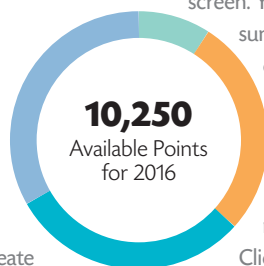
## Welcome Screen

To get started using the new Club Member website, continue to go to [hgclub.com](http://hgclub.com) or [myhiltonclub.com](http://myhiltonclub.com). When the new website is available, you will receive a notice inviting you to access the new experience and create a new profile.

**Tip:** Pay close attention to the links across the top of your screen. These will take you to the most important parts of the site, such as managing your Points and booking a vacation.

## Points Dashboard

The Club Member website has a whole new way of looking at Points. To view your Points, click the "Points" link at the top of your screen. You'll see a dashboard that clearly summarizes all of your Points. In the center, you'll see the total number of Points you have available to use this year.



**Tip:** Want to convert some of next year's Points to HHonors®? Click the "Manage My Points" link in the left-hand column. You'll see the conversion rate and the number of Points you have available to convert—enter the number of Points you want to convert, and it will calculate how many HHonors Points you'll receive.

## Single Booking Engine

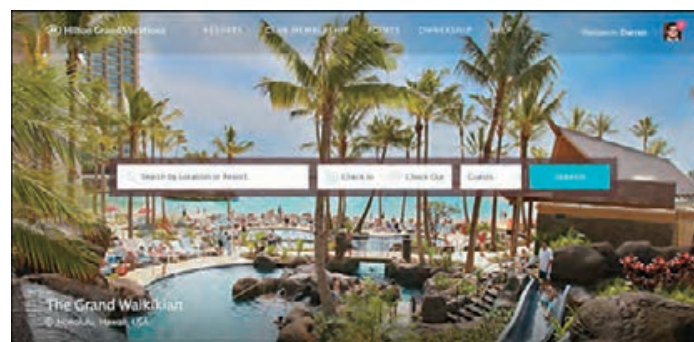
Say goodbye to Classic and Revolution. With the new Club Member website, you can book reservations using a sleek new booking engine that doesn't require Flash. To make your next reservation, click the "Resorts" link at the top of your screen, and then enter the resort or destination in the search box.

**Tip:** Once you've booked your reservation, share the details of your upcoming trip with your friends and family. Click the "Share on Facebook" or "Share on Twitter" icon at the top of the Reservation Confirmation page to post to your Facebook or Twitter account.

## Upcoming Reservations

The new Club Member website will tell you all about your upcoming trips. To see your reservations, click the Welcome message at the top-right of your screen, and then click the "My Reservations" link in the panel that appears. A list of all your Upcoming Reservations will appear. Click the "View Details" link for detailed information, including check-in and checkout times, confirmation number and more.

**Tip:** Get driving directions to your resort. Underneath the resort's address, click the "Get Directions" link. A new window will appear displaying directions on Google Maps.



## Exclusively Elite

Welcome to The Registry Collection, Members with Elite Premier recognition. The Registry Collection program provides exchange access to luxury resorts across the globe, as well as custom travel packages, event planning, personal concierge services and much more. Visit [theregistrycollection.com](http://theregistrycollection.com) to learn more about the outstanding benefits of this exclusive service.



# Up Close & Personal

Get to know **Nour Hafid**

If you've ever stayed at Hilton Grand Vacations Club at SeaWorld, you've most likely been greeted by the smiling face of Nour Hafid, the resort's guest services manager. *Club Traveler* interviewed Nour about his role and his favorite things to do in the Orlando area.

## Can you tell us what your day is like?

We start the day in our pre-shift meeting in which we discuss our spirit of service message, arrivals, departures and occupancy. We go over all information deemed important to that specific day and remind the team of the importance of making every single interaction with our guests count. It gives me great pleasure to work for a company that enables me to impact the lives of our Club Members and guests in a positive way and create memories that will be cherished for a lifetime.

## What is something about the SeaWorld resort that many Club Members may not know?

Hilton Grand Vacations Club at SeaWorld has a Bermuda theme. The buildings at the resort are named after the Bermuda parishes. We also have a Bermuda Moongate at the main pool area. In Bermuda, it

is believed that people who walk through it, especially couples and honeymooners, will be blessed with good luck.

## Do you have a favorite story or memory about a Club Member who has stayed at the resort?

As I have been at the SeaWorld resort for 13 years, I have gotten to know quite a few Club Members on a personal basis. One of our Members asked me if I remembered her son. My answer was, "Johnny, of course!" I have seen him at the resort since he was 10 years old. He liked spending time at our Activities Center and enjoying the pool area. Fast forward, when he was 21 years old, his mother asked me about colleges in the area and whether I would encourage him to work for the theme parks. I was deeply touched that she reached out to me for advice. This interaction gave me a great sense of fulfillment and confirmed that what we do on a daily basis goes beyond the few days a guest spends at our resort.

## What is your favorite Orlando activity to recommend?

Most of our Club Members come to Orlando to visit the theme parks, but for those who would like to do something different,

I recommend visiting Leu Gardens, a 50-acre botanical oasis filled with all sorts of flowers and plants that are refreshing to the soul. I also recommend the movie night at Disney's Fort Wilderness Campground and Resort, which is open to all guests at no cost to them—it starts with campfire lighting and s'mores, followed by a Chip and Dale campfire sing-along and then the movie.

## What is your favorite place to eat?

Taverna Opa offers great authentic Greek food and a great

atmosphere. I love to eat lamb, and they have some of the best lamb chops in the area.

## Where was the last place you traveled, and what is your dream vacation?

The last place I traveled was to Morocco to visit my family. I visited a few cities while there, including Casablanca, Marrakesh, Rabat and Tetouan. While I have a long list of dream vacation destinations, if I am to choose one and only one, it would be Bora Bora.





Stay at RCI exchange resorts in Europe

# ACROSS THE POND

Europe is a continent steeped in history. From ancient wonders like the Roman Colosseum and Stonehenge to modern-day marvels such as La Sagrada Familia and the Louvre, there's no shortage of treasures waiting for travelers to discover.

The continent is modest in size—only Australia is smaller—but it offers profound cultural differences among its approximately 50 countries. You can travel only a few hours and find yourself immersed in a new culture with its own customs and language. Many

European countries, however, belong to the European Union, which has a common currency (the euro) and open borders, making travel among EU nations easy.


Club Members can use Points to stay in Europe at RCI exchange resorts. Exchange resorts can be found in several European countries, including France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom and more.

To find resorts in Europe, go to the RCI exchange reservations site and select “Europe” under Quick Search or click the

European continent on the Search By Map tab. Then narrow your search to individual countries, and you'll see a list of resorts that are available for Club Members to request reservations. You can also sort the results by vacation type, check-in date or member review. Remember that weekly reservations can be made up to two years prior to check-in. And if the dates you're looking for aren't available, you can set up an ongoing search and RCI will notify you when your ideal vacation becomes available.

BORIS JORDAN PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES





Germany's Neuschwanstein Castle, located in the Alps in Bavaria, was built in the 19th century to honor Richard Wagner's operas and later inspired Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle.





# European Vacations

4 exchange destinations to book for your next trip

## GERMANY

In a land where fairy tales were inspired, cuckoo clocks are made and trains run on time, Germany is a destination that won't disappoint. The capital city of Berlin offers travelers world-class museums and historic places, such as the Brandenburg Gate and the remains of the Berlin Wall. At sunset, relax in one of several "beach bars" along the River Spree and watch as boats pass by and people trickle in and out of the Berlin Hauptbahnhof (Berlin's Central Train Station). For a different experience, take the train to Bavaria in southeastern Germany, where travelers can bike through one of Europe's largest urban parks, the Englischer Garten (English Garden) in Munich. In the summer, enjoy open-air theater in the park or stop at the famous Chinesische Turm beer garden for a pint and a Bavarian pretzel.



## MÁLAGA, SPAIN

Madrid may be known as Spain's cosmopolitan capital and Barcelona its cultural beacon in the north, but Málaga is Spain's sun-drenched tourist mecca. Lying on the southernmost tip of Spain along the Mediterranean's Costa del Sol (Sun Coast), it offers visitors miles of beautiful beaches and its own unique attractions. This is the birthplace of Picasso, and travelers to Málaga can explore a large collection of museums, including the Picasso Museum housing several of the master's paintings. The city is also famous for two Moorish hilltop castles, Alcazaba and Gibralfaro, and some of the tastiest tapas in Spain.



## SWEDEN

When you think of Sweden, the first thing that comes to mind may be the unusual furniture names at IKEA or ABBA performing "Dancing Queen." But the Nordic country, the largest of the five, is also a commendable tourist destination known for snow-capped peaks, unspoiled green forests and Viking lore. Travelers to Sweden can view Viking artifacts and other historic displays at the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities in the capital city of Stockholm. The country is also great for outdoor activities, from skiing and hiking to wildlife viewing. Sweden is home to reindeer, wolves, lynx and many other magnificent animals.

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## TENERIFE, SPAIN

Tenerife is the largest of Spain's Canary Islands, an archipelago located just off the coast of Morocco. The island enjoys a warm climate year-round and breathtaking scenery, making it one of the top tourist destinations in Spain and the world. Teide National Park, located in the center of the island, is a World Heritage Site and a popular attraction—Mount Teide, the park's active volcano, sits at the highest elevation in Spain and is home to some of its best hiking trails. The island also hosts a wild Carnival celebration each February that's second in popularity only to the one in Rio de Janeiro.

**Ready to explore exchange vacation destinations or book an exchange vacation with RCI?  
Log in to your Member website at [hgvclub.com](http://hgvclub.com) or [myhiltonclub.com](http://myhiltonclub.com).  
Then click the "My Club" tab and select the "RCI Affiliated Resorts" link.**



# STATE OF PLAY

These Club Members are on a mission to visit every U.S. state—and to experience the DNA of each one

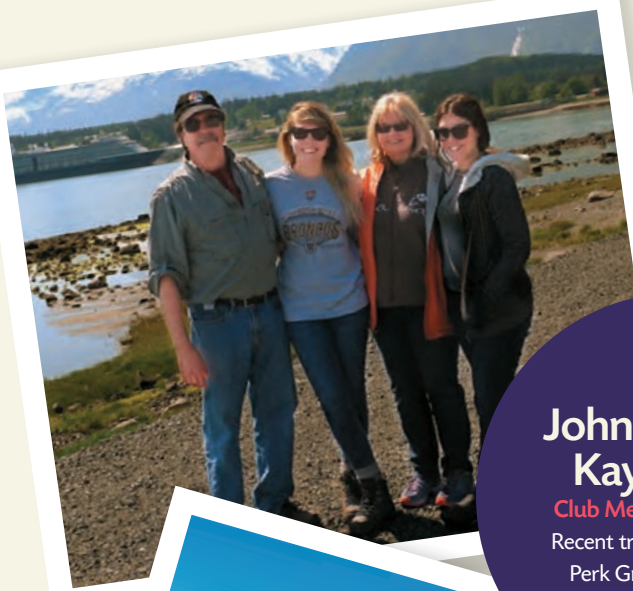
“We feel very strongly that the connection between travel and education is great. We often connected our daughters’ school experiences to our travels. We set ourselves criteria, which sometimes becomes a burden. In every state we must: do something related to the environment of the state, something cultural and something historical. In other words, you just can’t drive through the state.

“The first state we visited was Florida—we went to Sanibel Island. There we collected every seashell on a chart provided to us by a ranger, visited the Ding Darling Nature Reserve and found the best restaurant, the Bubble Room. We went on a day trip to Henry Ford’s and Edison’s winter homes and got a very different impression of these two men as opposed to the history we knew from growing up in Michigan.

“Our latest adventure was the Alaska Club Member cruise. We visited Denali National Park and saw so much wildlife. We also learned a lot about the indigenous peoples and spent time at the village of the Tlingit Clans. The Anchorage Museum is an unbelievable museum of native artifacts from each clan. We really enjoyed the Alaskan Native Heritage Center. In addition, we went whale watching, visited the sled dog training center, learned about lumberjacks, won music trivia in the piano bar on ship, saw the only hammer museum in the world, walked on and touched glacier ice and, in the evenings, talked about each day’s adventures over fantastic dinners on board the *MS Oosterdam*.

“We still have seven states to go: Washington, Oregon, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Kansas. We are thinking of combining the Southern states in a road trip to follow some of the historical aspects and sites of the Trail of Tears and Civil Rights struggles. We are interested in that history and it is a different approach to those states. If not, we have talked about going to Seattle. Things are harder now with our daughters both out of college and working.

“The Club has given us the ability to travel in many ways all over the country. Once we finish up with the U.S., who knows—we may start on countries, as the Club has a lot of opportunities abroad as well!”



## John and Mary Kaye Aukee

Club Members since 2004

Recent trip: 2015 ClubPartner Perk Grand Adventure to Alaska







## Hilton Grand Vacations Club

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AND ON THE WEB.

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Bookmark it on the web at  
[clubtraveler.com](http://clubtraveler.com).





# A VACATION STATE OF MIND





# A VACATION STATE OF MIND

Our Global Owner Services Team is pleased to provide you with the spring edition of *Club Traveler*! We hope you enjoy the magazine and engage online at [clubtraveler.com](http://clubtraveler.com) to stay connected to *Hilton Grand Vacations Club*. With more than 250,000 Member families worldwide, the Club continues to grow and thrive!

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