

New & Noteworthy

Guests arrive at the Banyan Tree Mayakoba via covered water taxi.

NEW ARRIVAL

Mexico, Meet Singapore

On the Riviera Maya, a distinctive hideaway makes a grand entrance. By Anja Mutić

Just when it seemed the Riviera Maya couldn't squeeze in another big-deal hotel, Singapore-based Banyan Tree unveiled its inaugural venture in North

America. What sets **Banyan Tree Mayakoba** apart? For one, the resort consists of only one-, two-, and three-bedroom villas, each with a private pool. The villas fuse

Mexican and Asian design, mixing Mayan-inspired furnishings and Mexican black-and-white *talavera* sinks with Far Eastern-style garden courtyards including

loungers and the pool.

The resort is set within a protected nature reserve of freshwater lagoons and mangroves with a maze of hidden alleys and waterways. It

seems not unlike a secluded, faraway village—even though the Cancún airport is just a 40-minute drive away.

At the spa, Asian folk remedies inform the treat-

New & Noteworthy

ments. The 3-hour Thai Herbal Detox package features a lemongrass-turmeric body scrub and a traditional salt pot massage, which uses a heated clay pot stuffed with Thai herbs and salt. The dining options are diverse. Saffron, a Thai restaurant, sits atop two pontoons by the leafy lagoon. Mediterranean specialties dominate the menu at Tamarind, Mexican cuisine at Oriente, and fresh seafood at Sands on the beach. For a private experience, guests can dine in their villas or create a customized menu to consume within the elegant La Cava wine cellar.

Visitors can ride a bike, motorboat, or electric buggy to a nearby private beach. Golfers can tee off at the Greg Norman–designed El Camaleón,

which is an Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary, meaning that Audubon International has vetted its ecological practices. Through its Green Imperative Fund, Banyan Tree backs projects such as reviving the area's endangered melipona bee population.

A word on rates: The Banyan Tree resort is one of the area's priciest pillows, but since its opening, the resort has offered frequent specials. Right now, guests who book a two-night stay before November 30 receive a 50 percent discount on a Courtyard Pool villa stay, plus daily breakfast and one dinner for two, and a 90-minute spa session for one. The offer is available for stays before December 17. *From \$655/night including breakfast; banyantree.com*



FROM TOP: The Spa Pool Villa sprawls over two floors. Each villa features an outdoor area with a pool, dining area, and massage tables for private spa sessions.

AMENITY WATCH

In the competitive world of luxury travel, hotels will try anything to woo customers. Here is a roundup of recent offerings.

ROOFTOP BEEHIVES >> In response to the U.S. honeybee shortage, the Fairmont Washington, D.C., recently let 105,000 Italian honeybees check in to three new hives on the roof. Guests can now enjoy fresh honey at the hotel's Juniper restaurant. *fairmont.com*

VERY YOUNG VIPS >> At the Beverly Hills Hotel, children under 13 receive a Very Young VIP Card entitling them to complimentary drinks at the Fountain Coffee Shop and Cabana Café, chocolate chip cookies, bath toys, and a teddy bear. *thebeverlyhillshotel.com*

BEACH BUM HONOR BARS >> The new Hotel Erwin in Venice Beach, California, features in-room honor bars stocked with all the essentials for hitting the sand: sunglasses, beach balls, and kites. *hotelerwin.com*

A ROOM OF HER OWN >> The Mövenpick Hotel Hanoi in Vietnam offers rooms especially designed for women, with softer color schemes, powerful hair dryers, padded hangers, potpourri, and moveable makeup mirrors. The six rooms are clustered near the gym and massage area for easier access. *moevenpickhotels.com*



FLIGHT WATCH FALL 2009

NEW OFFERINGS FROM U.S. AND FOREIGN CARRIERS

ROUTE	AIRLINE	STARTS
LOS ANGELES TO ROSWELL, N.M.	AMERICAN	8-25
BOSTON TO BALTIMORE	JETBLUE	9-9
LONDON TO VILNIUS, LITHUANIA	AER LINGUS	9-10
NEW YORK TO BARBADOS	JETBLUE	10-1
PHILADELPHIA TO BARBADOS	US AIRWAYS	10-1
PHILADELPHIA TO PARIS	DELTA	10-5
INDIANAPOLIS TO BALTIMORE	AIRTRAN	10-6
NEW ORLEANS TO BALTIMORE	AIRTRAN	10-6
MILWAUKEE TO DENVER	AIRTRAN	10-6
LONDON TO BUCHAREST, ROMANIA	AER LINGUS	10-25
LONDON TO LANZAROTE, SPAIN	AER LINGUS	10-25
NEW YORK TO ST. LUCIA	JETBLUE	10-26
NEW YORK TO KINGSTON, JAMAICA	JETBLUE	10-30



Visit the Savvy Flyer blog at ShermansTravel.com.

FROM TOP: COURTESY BANYAN TREE HOTELS & RESORTS (2); COURTESY FAIRMONT HOTELS & RESORTS; COURTESY DORCHESTER COLLECTION; CHRISTIAN HORAN/COURTESY HOTEL ERWIN; COURTESY MOEVENPICK HOTELS & RESORTS

WINE & TRAVEL

A Country Cloister

Given that 16th-century Jesuit missionaries cultivated the first grapevines of Chile's Colchagua Valley, it seems right to bunk up at one of their former haciendas when visiting the region. Such is the allure of **Residencia Histórica de Marchihue** (from \$200/night; residenciahistorica.com), an 18th-century estate transformed by its new owners into a 22-room hotel.

Set in the small town of Marchihue, a 40-minute drive from the region's hub of Santa Cruz, the Residencia feels utterly remote (especially when trying to find it after dark). Once there, guests will

discover a serene little sanctum, guarded by towering eucalyptus, rose bushes, and fruit trees. From a large garden, the amiable, talented young chef Pablo Galvez culls many of his ingredients (the hotel raises hens, ducks, and chickens as well).

Colchagua, one of a dozen wine regions in Chile's interior, leapt onto the world stage in 2005 when *Wine Enthusiast* declared it Wine Valley of the Year. A balmy climate and abundant sunshine render the valley warm enough to produce big, juicy reds—most notably carménère. Colchagua has been nicknamed the Napa of Chile, with a nod to its



The Colchagua Valley in Chile

climate and top-drawer restaurants and hotels, not to mention scenery and sophisticated wineries. The similarities thankfully stop there: Even during peak season, the valley retains the air of a pleasant farm town, where horses *clip-clop* along the road in lieu of limos.

Every corner of the hotel marries old and new and reflects the tastes of its Italian-Chilean owners, Vivien Jones and Silvio Castelli. Some

rooms house 400-year-old pieces of furniture from the estate of Vivien's grandmother outside Venice, while the gardens and dining room harbor sleek furniture designed by Philippe Starck and produced by Kartell, which Silvio's cousin founded. Walls inlaid with original moldings bear striking paintings by Cy Twombly and Jim Dine. The couple, however, keeps Andy Warhol's portrait of Silvio at home. —Becca Bergman



TRENDSPOTTING

Night at the Museum

Hotel art gets a bad rap—usually for good reason. Generic or kitschy prints line lodging walls around the globe. But some hotels strive for an artistic pedigree, curating exhibits or showcasing a private collection. Here are some of our favorites. —Thomas Pardee

Thompson LES, New York City << Light boxes of photographs from Lee Friedlander's "Apples & Olives" series; a Peter Halley installation; Gerard Malang's film stills of Andy Warhol lie at the bottom of the pool.

Fontainebleau, Miami Beach Six light panel installations from James Turrell's "Tall Glass" series; paintings by Karl Benjamin and Don Suggs; three chandeliers by Ai Weiwei; ceramic pieces by Mineo Mizuno.

XV Beacon Hotel, Boston A fifth-century Roman mosaic; paintings by Expressionist Theodoros Stamos from his "Sun-Box" series.

Gramercy Park Hotel, New York City Paintings by Andy Warhol, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, and Richard Prince; decor created by Julian Schnabel; a pool table and guest room chairs designed by Maarten Baas.

The Semiramis, Athens Rotating paintings by Jeff Koons; prints of photographer Spencer Tunick's "installations" of nude crowds; light boxes in every room by Karim Rashid, who also designed the hotel.

The Chambers, Minneapolis More than 200 pieces of work throughout the hotel and inside guest rooms from the Young British Artists group, including Damien Hirst, Angus Fairhurst, Tracey Emin, Gary Hume, and Sam Taylor-Wood.



CRUISE NEWS

Viking River Cruises

recently launched *Viking Legend*, a quieter, more fuel-efficient vessel with some of the largest suites of any river cruiser. **Peter Deilmann** is shuttering its 26-year-old river cruise operation, pulling all eight vessels off the water. The company will honor tickets purchased for cruises sailing through October. Deilmann's ocean cruising division is unaffected.



Check out the Cruise News blog at ShermansTravel.com.



Paradise Without A Passport

STAY HAWAII
STAY AQUA

AQUA®
HOTELS AND RESORTS



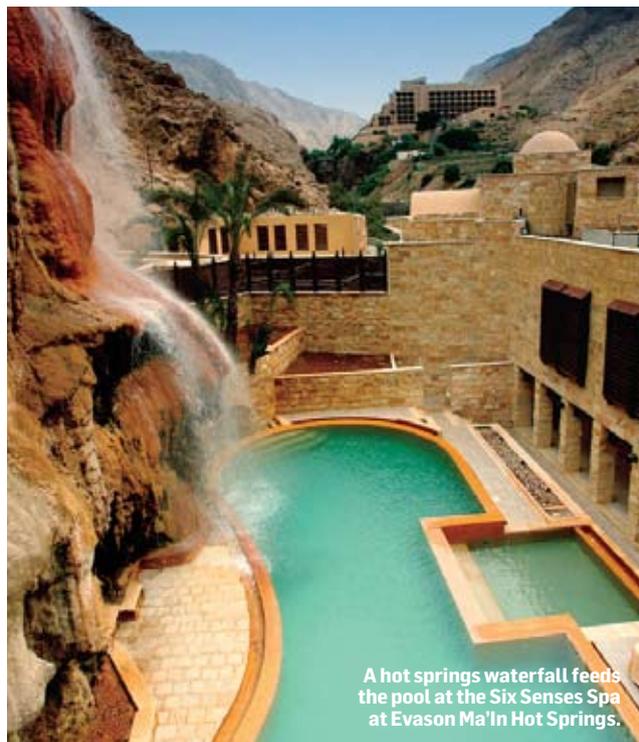
HAWAII WITHIN REACH

Value your vacation with excellent service,
great rates (US\$69 & up) + FREE stuff.

Book now at
www.aquaresorts.com/sherman

Call your travel agent or toll free
1.866.536.7974

New & Noteworthy



A hot springs waterfall feeds the pool at the Six Senses Spa at Evason Ma'In Hot Springs.

PLACE TO WATCH

The Jordan Trail Israel's Often-Overlooked Neighbor Goes Luxe.

Until recently, most visitors to Jordan barreled through the country on day trips to historic Petra from Jerusalem. But a spate of new luxury resorts and sensory experiences—the likes of which Israel has yet to produce—now makes overnighting here a must.

The **Evason Ma'In Hot Springs & Six Senses Spa** (from \$170/night; sixsenses.com/evason-ma-in) opened last February at the base of hot springs that, legend has it, King Herod once frequented. An hour's drive southwest of Amman, the resort provides perks such as an alfresco movie theater, a cliff-top restaurant overlooking the Dead Sea, and spa treatments using Dead Sea salt, local dates, and honey.

For visits to the Dead Sea,

the prime address remains the 345-room **Kempinski Hotel Ishtar Dead Sea** (from \$139/night; kempinski-deadsea.com), 34 miles southwest of Amman. Already considered the premier place to float in the sea's famously salty waters, the lavish beach resort debuted its large and sumptuous Anantara Spa last November.

About 140 miles from Amman, Jordan's stunning sandstone city of Petra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has beckoned to travelers for years. While there, visitors can learn how to prepare classic Middle Eastern dishes like baba ghanoush (eggplant dip) and maqluba (a rice-and-eggplant casserole) at the 3-year-old restaurant and cooking school **Petra Kitchen** (\$43;

reservations required; kitchen@petramoon.com). Afterward, travelers can embark on **Petra by Night** (\$42; jordantours-travel.com), a solemn candlelit walk that culminates in a live music performance before Petra's iconic treasury building. No luxury hotels have landed here yet, but the unusual **Taybet Zaman Hotel and Resort** (from \$146/night; jordantourismresorts.com) offers a memorable alternative, with unique rooms set in cobbled bedouin dwellings from the 1920s.

At the southern end of Jordan, the Red Sea town of Aqaba provides remarkable panoramic sightlines of Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The new 201-room **Kempinski Aqaba** (from \$237/night; kempinski-aqaba.com) is a chic place to get one's bearings. The crisp designer rooms offer sea views and complimentary minibars, and the happening pool scene wouldn't seem out of place in Miami.

Some essentials to know before visiting Jordan: The \$14 entry visa can be purchased on arrival but only with Jordanian dinars. If flying in, as most visitors do, to Queen Alia International Airport, exchange money in advance, as there are no ATMs before the customs gate. Rent a car at the airport and set out on the well-paved roads. For the most part, clear signs in English and Arabic mark the routes, so security checkpoints are the only quirky aspect of driving along the King's Highway; just show your passport. Those who prefer not to drive should splurge on the 7-Night Ultimate Jordanian Experience tour from Evason Ma'In Hot Springs. This includes visits to Petra, the Dead Sea, and more (\$7,713 for two people).

—Arabella Bowen