



PHOTO BY JANICE McDONALD

BELLA BOZZO

If you've ever wanted to escape and live in the countryside on a farm in Tuscany, Casale Bozzo offers the perfect opportunity. Located next door to the medieval village of Massa near Montecatini Terme, Casale Bozzo sits on a working olive grove and has two self-catering apartments where a travelgirl can stretch out and make herself at home. Sit on the terrace and take in the breathtaking views or wander down the country lane into Massa and mingle with the locals. The grounds are so gorgeous, you may never want to leave, but if you do, this is the perfect home base to explore Pisa, Siena,

Florence, San Gimignano or Lucca. The whole place is home to the delightful Marinella and Fabio Di Segni and their children who call the historic 17th-century farmhouse their home. Travelgirls will want to make this their home as well and come back to Tuscany again and again.

—Janice McDonald



www.casalebozzo.com



PHOTO: COURTESY DISNEY CRUISES

a fantasy cruise

Five-course dinner with wine pairings, sparkling clean luxurious accommodations, upscale cocktails at the bar with names like Ooh La La, Europa and Skyline, and a huge adults-only area with cushy lounges and waiters catering to our frozen beverage needs. Sounds like a five-star resort, right? No, we were enjoying every minute of our cruise through the Caribbean on Disney's newest ship, the aptly named Fantasy. And in our family of four, the youngest member is 21. Disney cruises aren't just for kids. No pint-size members of our crew, but we giggled like little kids while whooshing down the AquaDuck Water Coaster, were enchanted as we watched our crayoned drawings come to life in Animator's Palate and yes, I even waited in line with my daughter for photos with Belle, Ariel and Cinderella. Seems some things you never outgrow.

www.disneycruise.disney.go.com

What's Brewin' near San Fran

There's no beating the ambiance at Half Moon Bay Brewing Company. Located on Pilar Point Harbor near Half Moon Bay, 30 minutes south of San Francisco, the restaurant's gorgeous ocean view is matched only by the food and craft beer, brewed onsite. Try the beer sampler, which includes a delicious array of beer and cheese pairings and the fresh seafood sampler, with their signature Yucatan Ceviche and Ahi tuna poke. Celebrating its 12th anniversary this year, Half Moon Bay Brewing features live music, dancing and monthly political discussions with prominent speakers called Brews & Views. Dogs, kids, surfers and folks of all political opinions are welcome here.

www.hmbbrewingco.com

PHOTO: JAN SCHRODER

Skiting the Issue

I spend a lot of time in workout clothes. I'm either pre- or post-work-out and if I'm working at home see no need to get all gussied up in real clothes. But due to a combination of modesty, my upbringing and fear of massive VPL, I won't go anywhere else in my yoga pants. But with my new Skite, (skirt+tights – get it?) I can freely run those endless everyday errands knowing I'm discreetly and fashionably covered up. The Skite is available as a skirt only, in various lengths and several colors. I may never get dressed again.



Available in black, gray, white; www.theskite.com; \$69

PHOTO: COURTESY SKITE

Items this page — Jan Schroder



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hands-on healing

We know you can relate to being lost in a foreign country and having trouble deciding if you're excited, or terrified! There is a perfect T-shirt that shows and says just what to do — breathe! Hands Turned On has fitted tees with sayings such as "Excitement Without Breath is Fear," "Ten Seconds To Center" and "Practice Extreme Gratitude." These soft cotton tops come in a range of colors and have handprints on them that display where to



put your own hands to practice self-healing (or self-calming) techniques. Each shirt comes with a different nifty hangtag that guides you in performing energy healing and breathing practices.

Renowned energy medicine healer Dr. Ann Marie Chiasson wanted to launch a product that would give

customers easy access to the use of energy medicine anywhere. The shirts allow the wearer to engage in a healing practice without going to a workshop, class, healer or clinician. Besides that, they look cool, travel well, feel good on and spread a great message. —Cathie Arquilla

\$28 ■ www.handsturnedon.com



PHOTO: COURTESY DUPONT CIRCLE HOTEL

DELUXE DUPONT

As I sat in my plush bathroom on our private balcony overlooking tree-filled Dupont Circle in D.C. with a gin and tonic made from our complimentary in-room bar, I thought, *this must be how the 1% lives*. Although my carefully scheduled plans to finally see the cherry blossoms in D.C. were thwarted by their early arrival, (darn you Mother Nature!) I could console myself in luxury at the Dupont Circle Hotel. We were staying on Level Nine, an entire floor added to the eight-story property to house studio suites. And how suite it was — a gorgeous lounge with complimentary food and cocktails, magnificent views of our nation's capital and a well-stocked bar in our living room. We're talking fresh limes and lemons, olives and even martini spray. We also enjoyed a delicious Sunday brunch served downstairs at the popular Café Dupont. And I was even able to spy some of those gorgeous cherry blossoms — artfully displayed in an arrangement in the lobby. —Jan Schroder

www.doylecollection.com



PHOTO: COURTESY VIEWFIELD HOUSE

VIEWFIELD HOUSE

I felt like a princess in the tower and indeed this travelgirl was. Viewfield House in Portree, Scotland, on the Isle of Skye, is the family home of Hugh MacDonald. I'm sure we are related somewhere far down the road but Hugh makes all of his guests feel like part of the family. More than 200 years old, Viewfield is an incredible old stone manor house that is rich in history. Hugh's father and his father before him traveled the world and you could wander the house a thousand times and see something new each time. In the evening we enjoyed cocktails, a fabulous dinner and then after-dinner conversation with fellow guests. Rooms vary in size from suites to my big score. I lucked out and got the tower room. Yes, it was small but it had an amazing view and I felt oh, so cozy and special. Portree is centrally located and perfect for those who want to explore Skye. —Janice McDonald

www.viewfieldhouse.com



One Dress, Five Ways

Here's a travelgirl-tested dress that works coast-to-coast and even in fashion-conscious France. Managing Editor Jan Schroder says the 5-Way Nikki Dress by Abi Ferrin felt just right when she wore it out to dinners in San Francisco, Atlanta and Marseille. Jan says, "I felt totally glamorous and au courant. I wore it over leggings but more adventurous travelgirls can wear it on its own, as well as three other ways." Machine washable, it's made of a polyester/spandex blend and looks great even after being wadded up in a suitcase.

www.abiferrin.com ■ \$295

smile pretty!

On a recent trip to Miami Beach, while perusing the spa shop at the Fountainebleau, I decided that besides buying sunscreen to keep my skin milky white, my pearly whites needed some help too! I didn't have high hopes for my impulse purchase, but a week later, after using the BRUSHONSMILE pen twice a day, my teeth were noticeably whiter. There are lots of whiteners on the market these days, but this one uses all-natural ingredients and is stronger than the strips and pens you'll find at most drugstores — and it really works. It's also small enough to fit in a purse or a pocket, so it's perfect for travel. *Travelgirl* readers can type in promo code BOS-5 and get a \$5 discount!



—Valerie Kessler

\$24.95 ■ www.brushonsmile.com

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feast in philly

Benny the Bum's Crabhouse and Bar brings seafood center stage in the city of Philadelphia. Steve Levy, former owner of Philadelphia's upscale restaurant Spats on Bank Street Center City, is one of Philly's premier restaurateurs. Joined at Benny's by his sparkling wife Rhoda and good-looking sons Matt and Bret who anchor and manage the restaurant, the Levy family has made Benny the Bum's a Philly favorite. Highlights from the creative menu include a superb seared rare ahi tuna, baked clams casino and some spectacular quesadillas loaded with crab or shrimp. The raw bar is utter perfection with perfectly orchestrated shrimps cocktailed up in an exquisite red sauce and oh-so-fresh oysters on the half shell.

Salads choices include a classic Caesar, a tomato tower and a highly requested favorite, the Bum's salad, which includes a hearty portion of crabmeat and shrimp. Superb seafood tops the entrée list, along with outstanding steaks, ribs and chicken dishes — and some snazzy seafood pasta choices that will please even the most ardent carnivore. No restaurant is complete without desserts and when you're choosing from the mouthwatering choices at Benny the Bum's, you won't go wrong with the bread pudding or the brownie dessert. The bar scene is rocking late nights on weekends with tunes spun by a DJ.; this is the place to see and be seen. Open for lunch and dinner, Benny the Bum's is a class act acclaimed by locals and celebrities alike. Glance around when you are seated; if you are lucky you might catch a glimpse of Bradley Cooper; when in Philly this is his favorite place to dine.

—Renee Werbin

Benny the Bum's ■ 9991 Bustleton Avenue ■ 215-673-3000
www.bennythebums.com



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BREATHTAKING BAL HARBOUR

I was standing in the middle of room 810 at the brand-new St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort, unsure what to explore first. The giant walk-in closet, the phone with technology that allowed me to turn everything on and off, the deluxe bed or the 210-square-foot balcony overlooking the lushly landscaped pool areas and the Atlantic Ocean? Or maybe one of my two marble bathrooms, where even my toilet paper was artfully displayed on its own stand. It was definitely a level of luxury to which I would love to become accustomed.

This newest St. Regis near Miami just opened in January, with a glitzy lobby full of faceted mirrors and crystal chandeliers befitting its location in this upscale community known for attracting wealthy visitors from around the world. Guests can relax in the Bar and Wine Vault, while dining options include the Spanish cuisine at Atlantico and the Jean-Georges Vongerichten French-Asian restaurant J&G Grill, where we dined one evening on black truffle pizza, parsnip soup and local red snapper.

The Remède Spa is lovely and the huge fitness room overlooking the pool is well equipped. The elevators are so technologically advanced — just swipe your card and a car swoops down to pick you up and take you to your floor — that it took us a while to get the system down.

The St. Regis is located directly across the street from the famous Bal Harbour Shops, the top-selling retail center in

the United States where the word recession just means an indentation in a wall where a handbag that costs more than my car is displayed. Although I did find most of the shops rather intimidating, and was temporarily blinded by the gold of the Gucci storefront, I did manage to find a gorgeous cashmere sweater in Calypso St. Barth I could afford (on sale, plus 40% off!).

I had spent the previous night in another luxurious property, ONE Bal Harbour with its \$4 million art collection and only two rooms per floor. The balcony provided magnificent views of the Intracoastal Waterway and the ocean, the bathtub was situated for a fantastic view as well and the closet cleverly opened up to both the bedroom and the bathroom. Now really, what took so long for *that* innovation?

There are other accommodations here, catering to different tastes. For a more casual experience, try the Bal Harbour Quarzo, a boutique hotel where rooms overlook the Intracoastal Waterway and come with kitchenettes or full kitchens. For a more traditional experience, stay in the European-style Sea View Hotel, the oldest property in Bal Harbour where rooms offer views of the Atlantic Ocean and Biscayne Bay. —Jan Schroder

www.balharbourflorida.com

Above left to right: The pool area at the St. Regis; J&G Grill at the St. Regis; The Bal Harbour Quarzo, a boutique hotel; The lobby at the luxurious One Bal Harbour.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ST. REGIS BAL HARBOUR, BAL HARBOUR QUARZO AND ONE BAL HARBOUR