



Spirit Away

the Inspirational travel magazine

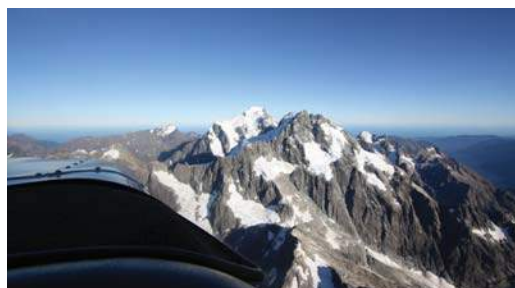


exotic resorts in dreamy locations



The Land of the Long White Cloud

A journey across New Zealand by Caroline



Holidays for me have always been an adventure in Europe normally involving an open top classic car, a group of fellow car enthusiasts and a ridiculous amount of driving. While such ventures have always been great fun I felt the time had come to venture further afield.

When I initially suggested New Zealand to my husband, the idea was immediately dismissed, however when I mentioned a car rally driving North and South Island with said group of car enthusiasts, miraculously, the idea actually turned into a reality. I had great fun planning the trip with the help of Marion Cadman at ITC Luxury Collection and together we came up with a trip of a lifetime. This has been endorsed by the fact that we all want to return at some stage to revisit places we have been to and enjoyed and to discover those which we did not get to this time around.

For us the combination of luxury lodges and little bed and breakfast accommodations worked perfectly for our group. We started in Auckland where we picked up our cars and off we went. The lodges we stayed in included **Kauri Cliffs**, in the Bay of Islands, **Huka Lodge** on Lake Taupo, and **Matakauri Lodge** just outside Queenstown.

All were superb offering sumptuous accommodations, excellent service, and fine dining, however, their main attraction was their locations – whether it was overlooking the Pacific Ocean, the Huka Falls or Lake Wakatipu in Queenstown, they were all amazing.

In Matakana our accommodation was at **Takatu Lodge**. We had sole occupancy here with just the five rooms. It was like having friends round to dinner but without having to do any hard work! In Blenheim we stayed at **Marlborough Lodge** located in the heart of the famous Marlborough wine region – again just ten contemporary suites – so again a very private affair. **Bronte Country Estate** in Nelson has just five suites right on the Waimea Estuary, once again, a real boutique experience. In Queenstown we stayed at **Richardt's Private Hotel**. New Zealand's most exclusive lakefront address with, again, only five generously proportioned suites.

Highlights of the trip included the ferry crossing from North to South Island. It has been described as 'one of the most beautiful ferry rides in the world' and I can certainly endorse this – we even saw dolphins in the Cook Strait and the majestic vistas of Queen Charlotte Sound were breathtaking.



Images (from left to right): Milford Sound (from the air and the water), Spot the Māori Competition!, Breakfast at Huka Lodge, The Lodge at Kauri Cliffs.

Finally, I have to mention our adrenalin filled day which started with a Grand Prix drive round the lake to Glenorchy air field where we boarded a light aircraft for a flight over Milford Sound to see the hanging valleys, alpine lakes and cloud-piercing summits. This was followed by a cruise on the fjords to the Tasman Sea and in the afternoon it was a Dart River Jet Safari. Happy memories of a spectacular day with many great photo opportunities. Please take the time to have a look at our brand new website where I have posted some of the photos - www.spiritawaytravel.co.uk.

All good things must come to an end and we said our farewells in Queenstown after what was a truly memorable trip. Two islands, both offering such different experiences from the yacht-dotted bays of the North, past the geysers, lakes and hot springs of Roturua, via the wineries of Marlborough and Hawkes Bay, to the glaciers, fjords and exquisite scenery of the South - New Zealand has it all. I hope this gives you a taste of my trip and I would obviously love to help with any of your enquiries should New Zealand be on your 'to do' list.



To find out more about New Zealand, please call Caroline on 01883 722656 or 07775 736697 or email: caroline@spiritawaytravel.co.uk



Welcome...

Welcome to the latest issue of our regular travel magazine where we hope to entice you with a varied selection of worldwide holiday ideas and destinations. So, why not treat yourself, partner, family or a group of friends to a well-earned break.

We are delighted to showcase the super sandy Caribbean island of Antigua in a special 5-page feature. With a beach for every day of the year it is no wonder that it is so popular, but the island offers even more to those that have the inclination to explore, perhaps along the famous Beach Bar Trail or in the company of the friendly locals on a Saturday morning hike into the hills and beyond past old forts and banana plantations.

Summer is almost upon us, and if you have not already made arrangements then perhaps our opening features on The Luxury Collection, The St. Regis Mardavall Mallorca and Columbia Beach Resort in Cyprus will offer some great suggestions for the perfect break with family and friends.



Specialist small ship cruising does not get better than aboard one of Ponant's new class of superyacht, and we are delighted to feature a very special new cruise tour on The Great Lakes between Toronto in Canada and Chicago in the USA with Tauck.

We cannot escape the attention given to the world's environmental concerns and it is certain that many readers are starting to consider if there are cleaner and more sympathetic options when deciding on their holiday destinations so we hope that our piece on sustainable tourism will offer a useful insight into the this important new trend in travel.

Finally we are very excited to announce that our brand new web site, www.spiritaway.co.uk, is up and running. Do please take a look - its taken a while but we hope you find it inspirational as well as telling you a little bit about our team and where we have travelled to recently. It will also be updated at regular intervals and you can always view past Spirit Away magazines under 'Inspire Me'. *Happy browsing.*

Contents

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visit our new look website



4



10



16



21

3	New Zealand with Caroline	12	Columbia Beach Resort
4	World Travel News	14	A New Look for Two Caribbean Classics
4	Summer with The Luxury Collection	16	Antigua Special Report
7	Family Values	21	Sustainable Tourism
8	A Story of Excellence	24	Tanzania with Melanie
10	The Great Lakes	24	Spirited Moments

Sprawling havens of exclusivity in the hills overlooking the Andaman Sea



Anantara have taken private villa rental to new heights in the hills above Anantara Layan Resort in a quiet corner of the beautiful island of Phuket in Thailand.

Guests to any of the fifteen sumptuous villas varying in size from 2-7 bedrooms will live in grand style with spacious private pools in accommodation that was specifically designed to melt into the forested hillside above the main resort, and lying within a protected National Park, this natural setting is unlikely to see further development. Everything is geared to maximum convenience including a live-in butler, a private chef and maid service, VIP airport transfers as well as full access to the facilities of the main, 5 star resort in the tranquil bay below including the Anantara Spa and the Chang Club for children.

Discover a bit of Branson magic this summer and early autumn at Son Bunyola



Situated on Mallorca's northwest coast, the secluded, 680-acre estate of Son Bunyola, owned by Sir Richard Branson, boasts three stunning villas: Sa Punta de S'Aguila, Sa Terra Rotja and Son Balagueret. With five, four and four bedrooms respectively, these three villas are ideal for a summer or early autumn break with family and friends.

Each all-inclusive villa provides a 5 star hotel-style service with a heated outdoor pool and your own dedicated host and chef. Whether exploring the locality or just admiring the stunning views over the sea and the surrounding mountains, Son Bunyola offers a tantalising, exclusive-use hideaway. Don't forget... during September and October shorter stays are available too!

Premium family friendly resort to rival competitors on the south coast of Sardinia



The recently refurbished Falkensteiner Resort Capo Boi lies in one of the most stunning locations on Sardinia's south coast in the middle of the marine protected area of Capo Carbonara. Nestled between lush gardens and granite rocks, the resort has its own sandy private bay with crystal-clear waters.

The 144 rooms and suites at the Falkensteiner Capo Boi Resort are spread between the main building, the "Garden" Pavilion and Villas, many of which are ideal for families. And when it comes to recreation and indulgences the resort delivers in buckets with excellent childrens facilities and activities, a choice of generous buffet meals at La Terrazza or a la carte dining on the beachfront at Restaurant Del Pescatore, and relaxing treatments at The Acquapura Spa.

The Canny Traveller

Travel trends in 2018

Land and ocean combination holidays

As cruising expands to ever more distant shores it is natural that many will view this as an opportunity to mix time on land as well ocean to create that extra special long holiday especially if it incorporates "once in a lifetime experiences" like extended sightseeing in China together with a cruise around South East Asia.

A return to form for Turkey for squeezed budgets

With the fall in the value of Sterling, Turkey is the most attractively priced country around the Mediterranean. Within the Euro zone Portugal and Greece offer best value.

River cruising goes global

With good exposure on television, river cruising gets ever more popular each year. Travellers have an amazing choice and for the more intrepid, "off the beaten track" destinations like Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Amazon in Peru all offer a special opportunity to experience a higher level of immersion in local cultures which the slow travel of river cruises allows.

Sustainable & Responsible Tourism

Following the impact of David Attenborough's "Blue Planet II" and subsequent media coverage, there is an overwhelming desire from many travellers to explore holiday options that lessen environmental impact and benefit local communities.

Summer in the Mediterranean with

THE
LUXURY
COLLECTION®



Play for All

● Pine Cliffs Resort, Albufeira, Portugal

Featuring a 9-hole golf course, beach club, Serenity Spa (with indoor pool) and fitness centre, seven outdoor pools, nine restaurants, Pine Cliffs Resort is an activity-packed treat for families in search of a holiday with more than just sun, sea and sand. The children's village, Porto Pirata, spanning 7,000sq m, and catering for babies, teens and in-betweens, makes this a top choice for families with children of all ages.

Some places simply take one's breath away, creating indelible, treasured moments. And it is in those places where the most captivating hotels and resorts of The Luxury Collection are discovered.

Discover the treasures of the Luxury Collection all across the Mediterranean this summer, whether it be family-friendly, activity driven resorts like Pine Cliffs in the heart of the Portuguese Algarve and The Romanos on the Greek Mainland. Or perhaps you are looking for a dreamy hideaway like your own grass-roofed villa in the gardens of the Hotel Pitrizza or the ultimate room with a sunset view from the cliff tops of Santorini at Mystique. Glance through this tantalising selection and you may well be compiling your wish list for many summers to come!



Golfer's Paradise

● Castillo Hotel Son Vida, Palma de Mallorca

Perched high above the city of Palma, Castillo Hotel Son Vida is housed in a magnificent 13th century castle with spectacular accommodation and classic dining. Meandering it's way around the hotel is the Son Vida Golf Club. One of the best courses on the island. Accompanying Son Vida Golf Club, you can enjoy golf on Son Muntaner and Son Quint which are also on the estate.



Turquoise Waters

● Hotel Romazzino, Porto Cervo, Sardinia

Undoubtedly one of Sardinia's foremost hotels, Hotel Romazzino occupies an enviable location, 11km south of Porto Cervo. Built to the highest standards in typical Sardinian style, the hotel overlooks a stretch of unbelievably turquoise coloured sea and offers the ultimate in service and sophistication. A great choice for families as the childcare and mini club are among the best in Sardinia.



Greek Showstopper

● The Romanos, Costa Navarino, Greece

As a part of the resort of Costa Navarino, The Romanos is the sister property of The Westin with whom it shares its facilities and glorious location at Navarino Dunes on the Peloponnese coast of Greece. Perfect for couples seeking spa and golf and for families, where kids can enjoy the kids club and water park. The hotel offer 289 rooms and 32 suites, all decorated in a contemporary style with warm colours. Views range from the golf course, olive and fruit groves and Ionian Sea. At the heart of the resort is The Agora - home to shops, an open-air cinema and traditional Greek amphitheatre. There are several bars and restaurants to enjoy including The Anax Lounge for sunset views and Souvlakerie for traditional Greek cuisine.



Chic Village Living

● Hotel Cala di Volpe, Porto Cervo, Sardinia

Overlooking one of the most beautiful coves of Costa Smeralda, Hotel Cala di Volpe was built as an ancient fishing village, with porches, arches and stairs. Built by Aga Khan in the early 1960s, the hotel quickly became a summer hotspot for well-heeled Europeans. One of the biggest draws to Cala di Volpe is its stunning location nestled in the rugged Sardinian hillside of Costa Smeralda and curving around the central harbour.



Natural Romance

● Hotel Pitrizza, Porto Cervo, Sardinia

Hotel Pitrizza is the ideal destination for those seeking calm and privacy in close contact with nature in one of the world's most romantic settings. Situated on a headland with elevated views of the sea, the hotel was built to perfectly blend and preserve the surrounding nature by famous architect Luigi Vietti. And these are no ordinary rooms but a group of villas, located in the midst of rocks and flowers.



Palatial Pleasures

● Blue Palace Resort & Spa, Crete

The Blue Palace is wonderfully situated in the stylish Elounda region, on the north-west facing coast of Crete. Boasting beautiful views of across the bay to Spinalonga Island this luxury 5-star beachfront resort exudes exceptional charm, architecture, style and is both the perfect hideaway for couples and also a firm family favourite with a variety of accommodation and activities to suit all needs including 3 outdoor pools, 2 children's pools and a range of dining and bar venues.



Rooms with a View

● Mystique, Oia, Santorini

If it's a combination of unmatched natural beauty and unparalleled luxury you're looking for then look no further than the remarkable Mystique Santorini. With 38 suites and villas the hotel caters to guests' needs perfectly and provides pampering and privacy in a stunning location. Two restaurants and an esteemed wine cave make the hotel ideal for travellers of taste and distinction. Its detached location on the fringes of popular Oia is a very good selling point!



Exclusive Chill-out

● Santa Marina Resort & Villas, Mykonos

Located on a private peninsula in the south-west of the island, the Santa Marina Resort is a chilled, exclusive-feeling spot for anyone visiting the "Island that likes to party". Boasting the only private beach on Mykonos, as well as a new look Oasis Pool and Lounge, discerning guests will love the privacy and exclusivity the resort affords and will adore the luxurious contemporary decor that abounds throughout the public areas and stylish collection of guest rooms, suites and villas, which are suitable for couples, groups of friends and families.



Turkish Delight

● Caresse Resort & Spa, Bodrum, Turkey

Nestled in the heart of the Turkish Riviera, Caresse Resort & Spa, Bodrum, enjoys an intimate position with captivating views overlooking the Aegean Sea and is definitely one of Southern Turkey's best kept secrets. The resort offers 84 stunning rooms, suites and residences which provide a haven of peace and relaxation. The subtle, earthy decor is distinctly minimalist featuring abstract artworks and quirky, custom-made furniture.



Family Values

The St. Regis Mardavall Mallorca Resort takes pride in delivering the perfect family holiday

If you are looking for a Mediterranean resort for a summer family holiday with the right mixture of adult luxuries, sublime and flexible family accommodation, great dining (including Michelin-star cuisine at Es Fum Restaurant) and most importantly a raft of facilities to keep the kids entertained then the St. Regis Mardavall on the south west coast of Mallorca should be a serious contender.

St. Regis Mardavall has a philosophy; if the children are busy and contented, the parents will be happy and relaxed. And the family holiday will be a resounding success. So the St. Regis Kids Club is one of the best. There's a varied and constantly refreshed programme of activities and exercise for children from 3 to 12, run by specially qualified staff who have a reputation for delivering contented young ones back to their rested parents after each day's activities. There's a great playground beside the pool area, extensive facilities in the Kids Club itself, and a full range of excursions. Even a golf academy.

The resort is located close to four of the island's best golf courses and is home to one of the Mediterranean's largest spas, being also Mallorca's first Thalassotherapy centre.



Superb seafront location



A family room



Es Fum Restaurant



The St. Regis Bora Bora Resort

A Story of Excellence

St. Regis maintains the exacting standards of its illustrious founder

If John Jacob Astor IV, possibly one of the wealthiest men at the turn of the 20th century, had not gone down in 1912 with the Titanic he may well have gone on to build more superb hotels like the quintessential St. Regis in New York City (opened in 1904), but thankfully his exacting standards of service and discretion remain the cornerstones of one of the world's most admired, luxury hotel brands.

He would also have appreciated, as something of an inventor (he designed an early form of air conditioning for the St. Regis New York), some of the modern innovations that add to the experience of staying in today's collection of 45 St. Regis properties worldwide. He would certainly be gratified with the continuing incorporation of the signature St. Regis butler service and the enshrined values of complete discretion.

From splendid city hotels to exclusive resorts St. Regis are to be found at some of the world's most impressive locations, whether it be the tropical dreamscape of Bora Bora lagoon or the gilded halls of a period residence in Florence the architecture is always striking and in various instances as with the St. Regis Shenzhen, China, a statement of cutting-edge modern innovation.

To stay at a St. Regis property is to appreciate a world of privilege, where the opportunity to experience time-honoured rituals like afternoon tea, the hotel's signature aperitif (1934) - a Bloody Mary, or to have your champagne bottle opened with a sword (Sabrage) are refinements from a much storied history and of a story of excellence that will continue through maintaining tradition alongside modern innovation.

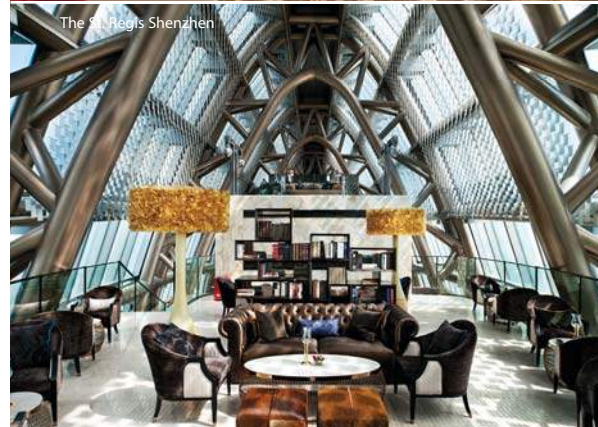


The St. Regis Butler

Astute in the artistry of service, the St. Regis Butler ensures that a guest's unique preferences are known and understood in every detail. From a forgotten travel item to a perfectly ironed suit ready for an important meeting, no request is too small or unattainable no matter the hour of the day.



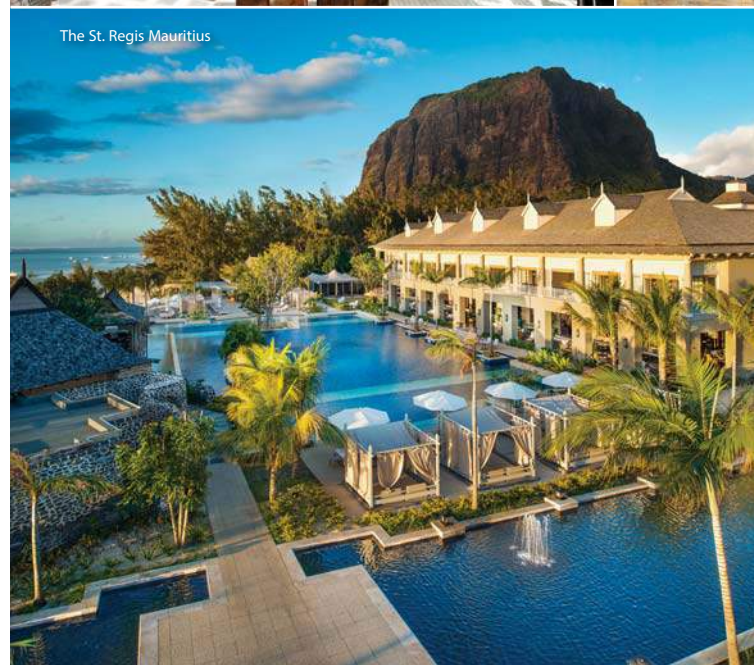
The St. Regis Florence



The St. Regis Shenzhen



The St. Regis Rome



The St. Regis Mauritius



The St. Regis New York

The Great Lakes

A much-storied journey between Toronto and Chicago with Tauck



Niagara Falls

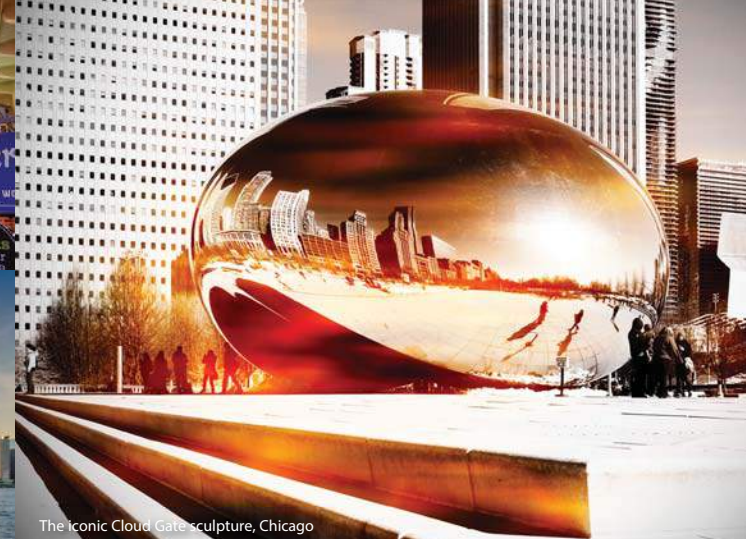
Statue of Ernie Banks, Wrigley Field



Henry Ford Motor Museum



Toronto skyline from Lake Ontario



The iconic Cloud Gate sculpture, Chicago



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore



Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel

Celebrating the debut of Ponant's state-of-the-art small cruise vessel, Le Champlain, 2019 sees the commencement of an exciting new cruise adventure along the waterways of the Great Lakes

These mighty lakes have played a vital role in the history and cultural fabric of North America for centuries and Tauck's new 12-day small ship cruise invites guests to explore these much-storied waters sailing between some of the unique cities and towns that have grown along their shores.

The trip begins with two nights in the Canadian city of Toronto before embarking on a 7-night Great Lakes cruise aboard the beautiful yacht Le Champlain before disembarking in the "Windy City" of Chicago for a further two nights. The cruise can also be done in reverse.

Guests will sail through Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Michigan, calling on destinations including Detroit, Mackinac Island, Traverse City and more.



Explore urban planning and revitalisation in the re-emerging "Motor City" of Detroit; celebrate American invention and ingenuity at The Henry Ford Motor in Dearborn; visit Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore; enjoy lunch at Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel; ride a dune buggy along the Lake Michigan shore; sample Holland, Michigan's Dutch heritage, tulips and beer culture; experience a Wrigley Field tour, an architectural cruise and a taste of Chicago in America's "Second City," and much more!

TAUCK
SMALL SHIP CRUISING

Le Champlain



Sophisticated styling, innovative "green" technology, and welcoming, attentive service are all hallmarks of Ponant's new limited-capacity Explorer Class yacht, Le Champlain, which offers just 92 staterooms and suites.

This luxe mega-yacht features six passenger decks, a choice of two dining venues and all-included bar and restaurant beverages throughout the day aboard ship, including house wines and spirits. Her environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed cabins, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside offer the perfect atmosphere for a truly unique cruising experience. A state-of-the-art theatre provides an intimate space for lectures and entertainment, while a spa and fitness centre provide for travel with ease.

Tauck's "Cruising The Great Lakes" small ship cruise includes:

Tauck's private shore excursions and distinctive inclusions

Two nights in Chicago at your choice of Fairmont Chicago, Millennium Park or Four Seasons Hotel Chicago

Two nights in Toronto at your choice of Fairmont Royal York or Four Seasons Hotel Toronto

Seven nights aboard the luxury small ship Le Champlain, cruising Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron and Michigan between Chicago and Toronto accompanied by one Tauck Director for approximately 40 Tauck guests. (Cruise may be a shared ship experience with non-Tauck guests)

Architectural cruise & choice of Chicago Art Institute or Wrigley Field visits in Chicago

Private off-road adventure at Lake Michigan dunes

Wine tasting of Lake Michigan area wines at a vineyard in Traverse City

Visits to the Music House Museum & Sleeping Bear Dunes National Seashore in Michigan

In Detroit, choice of city landmarks tour including the Motown Museum, or tour of The Henry Ford & Greenfield Village in Dearborn

Choice of visits to Royal Ontario Museum or Ontario Art Gallery in Toronto

Private boat excursion to Niagara Falls

Private reception and dinner at Casa Loma, a neo-Gothic castle in Toronto

Airport transfers upon arrival and departure

28 meals on land and sea (11 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 9 dinners), applicable fuel charges, service charges, portage and taxes



Columbia Beach Resort

Cutting-edge luxury has stepped up a level at one of the Mediterranean's top resorts

Where once there was two now there is one! Indeed, the western corner of the beautiful, 2km long Pissouri Bay near Limassol in Cyprus is now home to a stunning 169-suite resort that builds on an award-winning formula by upgrading and absorbing the adjoining Columbia Beach Hotel.

Spread over an impressive 75,000 m², Columbia Beach Resort offers guests a variety of spacious suite categories stretching from the beachfront, back through its manicured gardens and around its pools. In addition there

are four restaurants with a range of cuisines including gourmet Italian and Cypriot fusion (from Michelin-star-trained Executive Chef, Ioannis Giakoumidis) as well as a unique 'Dine Around' concept.

Further enhancing these Sleep and Dine options is the award-winning Hébe Spa, the existing 80 metre infinity pool and a new, separate family pool. Families will no doubt also enjoy making good use of the revamped children's club in collaboration with Worldwide Kids Company and the new dedicated crèche for infants.

For golfing activities take the resort's shuttle bus to the Eléa Estate (designed by Nick Faldo) as well as a further 3 courses nearby or take to the saddle at the cycling centre run by former Swiss cycling champion, Thomas Wegmüller.

A bus service also delivers guests to Paphos and Limassol (a mere 20 minutes away), as well as rural Troodos, with special stops along each route, such as Aphrodite's Rock. Should a guest wish to customise a local experience, the resort's Lifestyle Concierge service will be on hand to assist.



A New Look for Two Caribbean Classics



Never rest on your laurels - it's so easy to believe that your resort is timeless, but even in the tropical paradises of St Lucia and Antigua it is a good idea to keep a finger on the pulse of the inclinations of an ever more discerning clientele. With this in mind it is this magazine's privilege to notify its readers of some recent improvements to two Caribbean Classics...

East Winds

St Lucia's premier boutique retreat

East Winds is a premium all-inclusive resort on La Brelotte Bay, set in twelve acres of tropical gardens abundant with colourful plants and exotic birds. This luxury, boutique hotel is set beside a secluded, sandy beach and is perfect for those looking to completely unwind in an elegant and informal retreat, with outstanding food and plenty of things to do, not to mention the free flowing champagne daily.

During 2017 the resort has undergone extensive improvements that have included a facelift for the swimming pool including a new swim-up bar with a unique self-service angle enabling guests to get creative and test the cocktail menu by their own hand - eat your heart out Tom Cruise!. Making more of the spectacular beachfront has seen a total rebuild and enlargement of the resort's cherished Sunset Bar (Beach Bar), the best spot for a pre-dinner sundowner.

Guests are invited if they wish to participate in a full week of exclusive experiences, and these have proved so popular that new experiences have been added to make the most out of a St. Lucia holiday including a Bean to Bar Chocolate Making session at Howelton Estate or the chance to admire the upper rainforest on an escorted Aerial Tram.



Curtain Bluff

£10million top-to-toe refurbishment

Curtain Bluff is a family-run hotel on the south coast of Antigua that has consistently ranked among the finest resorts and tennis centres in the world, offering a renowned spa, fine-dining and outstanding all-inclusive value. With two beaches and lush tropical gardens flanked by stunning ocean views from all rooms, this cherished resort has recently re-opened after undergoing an impressive resort-wide refurbishment

The most significant changes include a fabulous new entrance and reception area, whilst the bar, cocktail lounge and Tamarind Tree Restaurant have a new energy with striking and fresh designer interiors.

There have also been significant refinements to the guest accommodation with bright new colour schemes to all rooms whilst all Signature Suites now come with their own private infinity-edge plunge pools. The Terrace Suite, always a popular choice with newly-weds thanks to its private location at the very top of the bluff, has had a complete redesign including new furnishings and a lavish spa bathroom.

Holiday planning takes on a new level with the introduction of both a "Wellness Concierge" and "Beach Concierge" catering to guests every need while indulging in spa programmes at the resort's famous wellness centre, or in the case of the beach, ensuring that beachtime ticks all the sunshine boxes, be it placing drinks orders, setting up activities and watersports or sourcing the ideal beach chair or hammock for the day or more.



Suite Dreams

A warm welcome and friendly atmosphere is assured at **Blue Waters Resort**

Set in 17 acres of tropical gardens and flanked by the glorious calm waters of Soldiers Bay on the north-west tip of the island it would be hard to find a more beautiful spot on Antigua than at Blue Waters Resort.

There is a comprehensive choice of accommodation ranging from beachfront and hillside rooms to sumptuous private villas, but perhaps the most enticing offerings are The Cove Suites, a stylish enclave offering guests unrivalled decadence and uninterrupted views of the Caribbean Sea. Situated away from the main resort, Cove Suites guests will be able to savour seclusion and privacy in spacious lodgings that will appeal to both families and couples with exclusive pools and a dedicated concierge service.

A range of activities, including a professionally supervised creche for little kids and club for older children makes this an ideal family choice, with the opportunity for parents to indulge in some adult pursuits like some pampering at the resort's Elemis spa or a round of golf at nearby Cedar Valley Golf Club, one of only two 18-hole courses on the island. The resort includes 3 restaurants, 3 bars and 7 freshwater swimming pools including one for adults only.



Antigua is the archetypal Caribbean island - sun-drenched, fringed with dazzling white sand and set by a warm jade and aquamarine sea. There are some stunning hotels, a burgeoning selection of luxury villas, and the island has a long tradition of sailing, both in historic association with Britain (Horatio Nelson was stationed here) and sailing in its modern form, as the venue for the Caribbean's major regatta and winter home to a number of mega yachts. However, it is for the easy life and friendly islanders - and the wide variety of beaches - that most people visit.



365 glorious beaches ...one for every day of the year

There are believed to be 365 beaches across Antigua and Barbuda, one for each day of the year. The great majority rest inside the calm, protected waters of the Caribbean Sea, whilst others are positioned on the tempestuous Atlantic Ocean. All are open to the public and so the challenge posed to the visitor is not how to gain access to the best of them, but simply how to locate the beach that suits your mood.



World-class sailing destination

Antigua along with Barbuda is internationally renowned for having some of the best sailing conditions and premier sailing events in the world. With stunning bays, a variety of anchorages and clear blue waters this Eastern Caribbean island is a favourite for world class racing or laid back charters. For learners and amateurs through to seasoned professionals the waters around Antigua offer some of the best sailing conditions matched with unbeatable scenery.

Water-based activities throughout the year

Visitors can make a splash any time of year in Antigua with a range of water-based activities from diving and snorkelling, fishing, windsurfing and of course swimming with stingrays at the world-famous Stingray City.

Antigua's Naval Heritage

In the early eighteenth century, the British Royal Navy recognised the strategic importance of English Harbour in protecting ships from hurricanes and in its position at the south of the island for monitoring French naval activity. Throughout the eighteenth century, the dockyard grew in importance, as it was the only harbour in the Eastern Caribbean large enough for safe naval ship repairs. From 1784 through 1787, the British Hero of Trafalgar, Horatio Nelson, served as the captain of the H.M.S Boreas, sent to Antigua to enforce British laws in the colonies. When the restoration of the dockyard began in the 1950s, it was renamed Nelson's Dockyard in honour of the years he spent in Antigua.



Discover hidden delights along the

Beach Bar Trail



The Antigua & Barbuda Tourism Authority has launched the 'Beach Bar Trail' to help show visitors some of the best spots on the islands. From foodie gems to romantic hotspots, party bars to hidden hangouts that only the locals know about, the map is designed to encourage visitors to Antigua and Barbuda to explore the islands - hopping from bar to bar and soaking up the best of Antiguan hospitality along the way.

But it's not just about food and drink. These beach bars also give visitors the chance to experience local culture and see a different side of Antigua. *Ana's* on Dickenson Bay exhibits works from local artists; guests at *Miller's* could be invited to join a game of beach volleyball with the locals; and on Fridays *Castaways* on South Beach comes alive with live bands and local DJs for its weekly Barbecue Bonfire Beach Party.

Families are also well-catered for at Antigua's beach bars, with everything from water sports at *Sneaky Pete's*, crazy golf and jungle gym at *Putter's*, to special kids' menus at *Bumpkin's*.



Old Fashioned Charms

A soothing ambience just makes you relax at
The Inn at English Harbour

The Inn at English Harbour enjoys a delightful location on a wooded headland at the entrance of the historic English Harbour, one of the most picturesque corners of Antigua.

Set amidst 19 acres of beautiful gardens overlooking the Caribbean Sea on Antigua's south-western coast, The Inn at English Harbour strikes the perfect balance between Colonial charm and modern comforts.

Twenty four suites are located in the main part of the hotel and there are a further four suites in two cabanas directly on the beach. Each suite has a private balcony or veranda, and all have been elegantly decorated with dark mahogany floors, wooden furniture and crisp white linen.

The casual Reef restaurant is open during the day for breakfast and lunch, while the Terrace restaurant in the original house boasts the perfect setting for an al fresco candlelit dinner. There is a large infinity pool, two tennis courts and a fitness centre at the inn and complimentary snorkelling and kayaking are also available. There is a small spa and historic Nelson's Dockyard is just a couple of minutes boat ride away.



Modern Caribbean Classic

Carlisle Bay delivers simple, discreet luxury

Pared-back beauty, contemporary styling and simple sophistication are the hallmarks of Carlisle Bay, an 87-suite hotel and member of Leading Hotels of the World. Opened in 2003, it immediately set a new benchmark for Caribbean style and service and comes laden with international awards.

In a spectacular location in the centre of a calm bay on Antigua's southern coast, Carlisle Bay features spacious Bay, Ocean and Garden Suites for couples which are quite separate from the family-friendly Beach and Carlisle Suites. All have ocean views and cool calm interiors.

Guests can enjoy tennis, the large gym, a long list of water sports and classes (yoga in the tropical gardens is popular), while those looking to unwind can chill out in the hip library or spa. Carlisle Bay excels at looking after families of all ages with a highly acclaimed kids club.



Festivals & Regattas

From street carnivals to world-class sailing events there is a buzz in Antigua all year round. Here are some of the highlights...



Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta

Mid-April

One of the most renowned Classic Races world-wide, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta takes place every April. The whole regatta has the feel of a bygone era, with the inclusion of the Parade of Classics in English Harbour, where you can catch sailors bedecked in period costume after the Sunday race.

Antigua Sailing Week

Late April/Early May

Over the last two decades, Antigua Sailing Week has become one of the biggest events in the international sailing calendar, and it is one of the most fantastic times to visit Antigua and take advantage of an island-wide party.

Antigua Carnival

Late July/Early August

Dating back to 1834 and the abolition of slavery on the island, the Antigua Carnival is a celebration of music and dance held annually from the end of July to the first Tuesday in August. The most important day is that of the j'ouvert, in which brass and steel bands perform for much of the island's population.

Independence Day

1st November

Antigua gained total independence on November 1st 1981. The festival consists of a week of celebrations, competitions, parades, expos and food fairs – for all Antiguan living both home and abroad and residents of Antigua, as well as visitors.



World-class cuisine on the cliffs

Make a gastronomic pilgrimage to **Sheer Rocks**

Having won numerous awards including *USA Today's* Best Restaurant in the Caribbean and *TripAdvisor's* World's Best Fine Dining Restaurants - Travellers Choice Awards, it comes as no surprise that Sheer Rocks is a must visit when in Antigua.

It is hard to resist the allure of this stunning restaurant and bar. Poised artfully on the edge of a remarkable west facing bluff, Sheer Rocks, on the southwest coast of Antigua, accentuates the glory of its idyllic Caribbean setting. Cliff edge private dining pavilions are interconnected by wooden decks and are partitioned by diaphanous drapes that float in the trade breezes.

Carefully sourced local ingredients are married perfectly with contemporary flavours by talented UK Chef Simon Christey-French and his team to create unique culinary delights, especially the inspirational five and seven course tasting menus.

Join the 5am Club

Get "overjoyed" on a Saturday ramble with the locals



When Oral Evenson and Connie Richmond together with 8 fellow colleagues from APUA (Antigua's power and telecoms company) decided to take an early morning hike from Falmouth to Rendezvous Bay in October 2009 it signalled the start of the famous 5am Hiking Club, a free for all event that takes place every Saturday, when everyone is in the weekend mood and overjoyed for it!

So, if after a week of lounging in the sun you feel the urge to get up early and mingle with the locals, what better way to get to see the island than a hike with the bright orange t-shirts of this nature-loving brigade.



Boutique Seclusion

at **Hermitage Bay**

Hermitage Bay is a natural paradise, a perfect retreat for anyone wanting to escape the stresses and strains of a busy life. This secluded haven consists of just 25 single storey Cottage Suites with locations on the beach front or on the hillside of a perfect bay, spread across beautiful tropical gardens, and surrounded by 140 acres of lush, undeveloped land. For those in search of true seclusion, why not reserve one of the hilltop suites.

In the distance, the islands of Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis form silhouettes on the skyline. The large, natural mangrove that adjoins the property supports a unique and intriguing eco-system of its own and enhances the natural beauty of the bay with its still, dark waters and diverse plant life.

Hermitage Bay is about 30 minutes from the capital of St. John's and just 10 minutes away from the Jolly Harbour marina complex that offers shops, restaurants, golf and tennis.



Exploring Antigua

Some places of interest and a useful guide to the location of the featured hotels



Sustainable Tourism

The issues of global warming and pollution, diminishing wildlife and blighted natural landscapes, the migration of peoples, the depletion of resources, and even the globalisation of modern, first-world consumerism have each contributed to the worrying state of health of our delicate planet. There is no easy solution, but the seeds for a fundamental change in how we treat our environment is beginning to happen.

For instance, the problem with plastic packaging is being addressed, although it is ironic that a country like Kenya, rather than a western powerhouse nation should lead the way in imposing a full ban on plastic bags, viewing the threat as worthy of high fines and even prison time. Similar bans are due to be introduced in South Africa, Chile, Oman and Sri Lanka.

In the world of travel, the whole planet is easily accessible, and whilst the carbon footprint of travel itself is hard to justify whilst fossil fuels are the main source of propulsion, there is a growing awareness of the need for sustainable "destination" tourism. This trend ranges from initiatives to use tourism revenue to directly support local communities to the use of innovative processes and eco-friendly materials to reduce harmful emissions and create cleaner energy. From a cultural perspective, sustainable tourism promotes a greater awareness of the heritage of the destination, involving the traveller in a more authentic experience.

There are even issues for sustainable tourism in our cities as well. It is obvious when viewing fragile destinations like Venice that overtourism is a major problem that can both reduce the livability of the urban environment as well as increase the potential for waste. The promotion of eco-friendly hotels in cities across the globe is definitely a trend that will grow, responding to a genuine concern from eco-minded travellers.

The following pages feature some examples of initiatives taken by some luxury travel innovators...



Organic Wellness

Soneva Kiri
Koh Kood, Thailand



Remote yet accessible by a 90 minute flight from Bangkok on the resort's private plane, phenomenal Soneva Kiri sits on Thailand's 4th largest but least populated island, Koh Kood, in the Gulf of Siam. Located on the idyllic beach or sunny slopes in the rainforest, the 36 resort villas are amongst the largest in the world and all come with stunning infinity pools, eco-chic furnishings, and personal electric buggies.

Soneva Kiri is part of the Soneva Group, a pioneer in sustainable luxury tourism. Ahead of the trend in which luxury moves toward experiences rather than possessions, Soneva endorses a concept it calls SLOW life (Sustainable Local Organic Wellness Learning Inspiring Fun Experiences) where cherishing the local community and a sustainable way of being are cornerstones of the resort. For example, you can enjoy nightly films at Cinema Paradiso in an open-air, jungle-enshrouded cinema built over a rainwater-harvested reservoir that supplies the resort with fresh water. Another example is encouraging eco-enthusiasts to travel with a "Stay for Good" promotion where you'll get free nights in exchange for working alongside marine biologists, ecologists, and horticulturists to help support local sustainability initiatives in the area.



Island Sanctuary

The Four Seasons Resort Seychelles at Desroches Island, Indian Ocean

Escape to Four Season's new five-star Seychelles resort in the Amirante Islands – remote and secluded, but just a 35-minute flight from the main island of Mahé. Feel like a true castaway as you explore this pristine tropical sanctuary edged by 14 kilometres (9 miles) of soft white beaches.

With most of Seychelles' islands uninhabited, and with nearly 50% of the total land under natural conservation, this island archipelago is a leader in sustainable tourism. On Desroches Island, Four Seasons have embraced the needs of the island's 100-strong local population, some of whom work at the resort itself whilst others are craftspeople with their own workshops, welcoming visitors from the resort to visit their village by cycling across the island.

In addition the resort runs an interactive Discovery Centre where children in particular can explore three dedicated learning areas to enhance their knowledge of the island habitat. They can also visit the island's special sanctuary to learn about the Aldabra giant Tortoise, a species in danger of extinction. Thatched shelters provide shade for the tortoises, creating a safe, comfortable space for them to breed and grow. Watch them feed on fruit and vegetation.



Serengeti Heritage

Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti, Tanzania

When it comes to sustainable tourism, perhaps the continent that has needed to work hardest to protect its fragile natural habitat is Africa. It is home to the world's most abundant wildlife reserves but equally an environment under constant attack from population growth, and its need for resources, which once removed are hard to replenish, so wildlife conservation works closely with educating communities of the value of their heritage as well as ensuring a flow of income from safari tourism.

The world's best-known wildlife sanctuary and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Tanzania's Serengeti National Park measures close to 14,763 square kilometres (5,700 square miles). And Four Seasons Safari Lodge Serengeti, Tanzania, is nestled in the heart of it all.

In addition to the magnificent surrounding wildlife, Four Seasons delivers memorable ways to experience the Serengeti, with unique activities that include hot-air balloon rides across the plains, picnics in the bush, and safari photography classes. The Discovery Centre is a great place to learn about African culture and history. Guests can get to know the local Maasai people and become involved in socially responsible programmes, such as those that help local schools and support wildlife conservation.



The Shape of Things to Come

Svart Hotel, Northern Norway

In collaboration with Arctic Adventures of Norway, Asplan Viak and Skanska, Snøhetta have designed "Svart" the world's first Powerhouse hotel, at the foot of the Svartisen glacier that runs through Meløy municipality in northern Norway. The hotel is situated just above the Arctic Circle.

"Svart" is the first building to be built after the energy positive Powerhouse standard in a Northern climate. Not only does this new hotel reduce its yearly energy consumption by approximately 85% compared to a modern hotel, but it also produces its own energy - an absolute "must" in this precious arctic environment. The hotel will also become the world's northernmost Powerhouse building.

Building an energy positive and low-impact hotel is an essential factor to create a sustainable tourist destination respecting the unique features of the plot; the rare plant species, the clean waters and the blue ice of the Svartisen glacier. Opening in 2021.



Artist Impressions courtesy of Snøhetta/Plomphoezen



Urban Gardening

A greener experience at 1 Hotels in Miami and New York with more to follow...

As a luxury lifestyle hotel brand inspired by nature, 1 Hotels cultivates the best of eco-conscious design and sustainable architecture, together with extraordinary comfort and an unrivalled level of service. 1 Hotels, launched in 2015 with the opening of exclusive properties in Miami's South Beach and Manhattan's Central Park, followed by their Brooklyn launch in late 2016, developed with the simple idea that those that travel the world also care about it. 1 Hotels upholds this vision by channelling nature through design, culinary partnerships, connecting with the local community and taking small steps to make a big difference.

At the core of the hotel's sustainable strategies is a fundamental pursuit of mindful conservation which is impressive in the detail from simple avoidance of plastics in preference of natural organic materials be it recycled wooden room key fobs, recycled cardboard water cartons in the meeting room, driftwood designed furnishings or the use energy efficient heating and cooling systems as well as L.E.D illumination to reduce electrical demands and heat build-up from lighting. The eco-conscious activities are endless, and guests will be inspired by the constant greenery that literally brings nature into every corner of the hotels from vertical lobby gardens to plant pots on tables.



Last year, I celebrated a very special birthday on safari and on the beach in Tanzania. It was an amazing journey with outstanding accommodation, unforgettable game viewing and even a heavenly hot air balloon ride over the Serengeti.

The variety of accommodation made each day a different experience beginning with Maramboi Tented Camp at Lake Manyara where we took a guided walk to the lake to see thousands of flamingos.

At Ngorongoro Crater, we stayed two nights at Oldeani Lodge and spent the evenings eating dinner in the large beamed dining room after being entertained by Massai dancers.

The Four Seasons Serengeti was the highlight for me. From our balcony and the hotel's infinity pool, we had the privilege of watching elephants, giraffes and zebras taking their turn to drink and bathe in the watering hole. The food quality was excellent and the warm welcome from the General Manager

made the whole experience feel very personal.

The Luxury tents in the Serengeti were just that, with attentive service, good quality furnishings and taking showers with hot water requested by walkie talkie. Dinner was served under the stars in the bush and the evenings ended with a cautious walk back to our tent! We stayed at two tented camps, Kiota in central Serengeti and Chaka in northern Serengeti.

The game drives, in our personal 4x4, were different every day from a close-up view of a pride of lions to watching thousands of wildebeest crossing the Mara river. At dawn one morning, we experienced the Serengeti from a different view as we launched in a hot air balloon and watched the sun rise whilst gently floating over the plains above prowling lions and hippos basking in the sun. Take-off and landing was a real experience, but our return to Earth was enhanced with a glass of champagne and breakfast in the bush under an acacia tree with a lion watching from a distance!

After a week on safari we flew to the island of Zanzibar and spent a week relaxing at The Residence which felt like a secret hideaway.

All the villas have their own large plunge pools and are very spacious with outdoor showers. The hotel sits on a long white sandy beach and has a large infinity pool and you can cycle everywhere – to the restaurants, spa, gym and beach. The Dining Room offers international dishes 'with a view' and some evenings dinner is served on the beach by the water.

The white sand, palm-fringed beaches are regularly voted some of the best in the world. We spent relaxing days soaking up the sun, trying out water sports and snorkelling among the colourful corals. We also visited the historic capital, Stone Town and took a local dhow boat to Prison Island.

A perfect chill out after an exciting Safari.

To find out more about Tanzania, please call Melanie on 01732 860503 or 07785 706623 or email: melanie@spiritawaytravel.co.uk



Spirited Moments

Gleneagles, A Glorious Playground *by Nicola*

You don't have to go far for a luxurious, and adventurous short break. I visited the 'Glorious Playground' of Gleneagles, just a short hop from Edinburgh airport.

Renowned for its first-class golfing facilities, Gleneagles is far more than just a golfer's paradise with activities for the whole family. There's an indulgent spa, indoor and outdoor pools, plenty of country sports including clay pigeon

shooting, rifle shooting, fishing, falconry and walking. Not to mention archery, tree climbing and a zip-wire. There is also a riding school, indoor and outdoor tennis courts and bikes to hire. Children can learn to drive their own mini Landrovers or have endless fun in the Kids Club or Teen Den. Accommodation is spacious and luxurious, and the restaurant choices are aplenty with wonderful Scottish Salmon and Aberdeen Angus beef on the menu. A perfect active family weekend away.

To find out more about Gleneagles please call Nicola on 020 8460 6760 or 07885 990505 or email: nicola@spiritawaytravel.co.uk



New York New York *by Katie*

This was my husband's first time visit to New York so expectations were high and it certainly did not fail to deliver! We were greeted in true New York style on arrival at the lavish Mark Hotel, perfectly located on Madison Avenue a stone throw from Central Park and some serious shops!

As the snow started to fall we decided to head to the World Trade Centre Memorial, for what was an incredibly emotional experience but also a fitting tribute to those

who lost their lives on that tragic day. A place that should be on everyone's list when visiting as it makes New York what it is today. Other excursions included Esquina for some of the best Mexican food and tequila in town and we also sampled the burgers at Burger & Barrel washed down with New York's finest pale ale.

This is just a brief snapshot of one of our first weekends away without the children – it was magical and, hopefully, we will be able to plan many more.



To find out more about New York please call Katie on 07852 263549 or email: katiellewis@gmail.com

Four Seasons Langkawi, Malaysia *by Brinley*

Langkawi, an epic UNESCO Geopark experience where frangipani grows in abundance and the weather is warm all year round, is the perfect destination for families and couples with 91 rooms and suites spread over 48 hectares and a mile-long beach.

One half of the resort is perfectly set up for families, with a beautiful family pool, kids club and plenty of watersports to keep everyone happy. And the other half is a haven of peace and quiet, with an adult only pool, for those wanting time out from the

children or to celebrate their honeymoon.

The food and service were excellent, and with complimentary bicycles and golf buggies to transport you around, it was a joy to explore the resort and all it has to offer.

This resort definitely hits the mark as a perfect family destination. Children under 5 eat for free and the kids club is outstanding. With rock climbing, fishing, crab hunting, beach football, batik painting and much more, it's no wonder we couldn't keep them away from the place!

To find out more about Langkawi, please call Brinley on 01883 723 622 or 07901 933 594 or email: brinley@spiritawaytravel.co.uk



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