

Making a difference in today's world



The Alliance Bulletin

Providing key information in a no-frills format for professionals who travel to write, edit, broadcast or create images.

Issue 294 : mid-April 2020

The International Travel Writers Alliance

Making a difference in today's world

Coping with COVID 19 The Alliance's travel industry partners and their agencies are determined not to be beaten by the Coronavirus.

Please do anything you can to help them get their information and images out there.









Visit Florida is enabling a virtual roaming of 825 miles of beaches.



- www.visitflorida.com/en-us/florida-beaches/beach-finder
- Hannah Mulvey at Hannah@goshpr.co.uk

Visit Florida has captured images along the Sunshine State's 825 miles of beaches using Google's Street ViewTrekker technology.

These 360-degree images, captured 'one footstep at a time', are integrated into Google Maps, enabling potential visitors worldwide to experience interactive views of Florida's beaches.

Users "tune" their preferences, choosing from adventurous or laid back, family-friendly or romantic; action-packed or secluded and manicured or au naturel.

The Florida Beach Finder immediately delivers visual choices that best match desires.

Once users have picked their favourite beach, they can opt for Street View, which drops them into each location, allowing them to take a look around and to explore.



Visit Denmark's virtual trip



Mette Johnsen/VisitDenmark

VisitDenmark has launched an online culture box to offer a 'bit of distraction for the many people asked to stay at home and avoid social contact'.

www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/things-do/visit-denmark-from-home

Livestreams in the wild



Follow the white-tailed eagle, the wild boar and the daily surf in Cold Hawaii in Klitmøller with these nature focussed livestreams.

Or discover footage of Murmurations of starlings, the stunning Mols Bjerge and the seals from Thy National Park.

www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/things-do/visit-denmark-home/livestreams

Eagle TV

The Danish ornithological society, DOF BirdLife, is currently streaming live from the nest of a majestic white-tailed eagle on Lolland. The nest currently has three eggs ready to hatch. www.dof.dk/oplev-fuglene/ornetv

The Black Sun

Murmurations of starlings cut beautiful shapes in the air before they roost.

Filmed at the Wadden Sea, where tours of the best black sun sites take place at key points through the year.

www.eng.nationalparkvadehavet.dk/experience-the-national-park/

Danish culture



Christian Hoyer/Designmuseum Danmark

Some of the best digital content in art, design, architecture and culture has been gathered to enjoy at home, including a tour of the Danish middle ages and interviews with artists and architects.

www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/things-do/visit-denmarkhome/culture-your-sofa



Visit Denmark's virtual trip (cont)









Enjoy live concerts by Danish artists performing in their own homes with the private initiative Corona Concerts.

www.coronakoncerter.dk

Still there and happy to help :

- www.visitdenmark.com
- Maria Bleeg at marble@visitdenmark.com

Cook the Danish way



From impossible to pronounce Danish desserts to the daily staple, rye bread, there's plenty of recipes to our famous cuisine to keep you occupied.

www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/thingsdo/danish-food/danish-recipes



Stroll along the Danish shores



There's the chance to take a virtual walk, using Google Street View, and discover white cliffs, dramatic fjords and a dramatic coastline.



Virtual tours of Bristol



Banksy's Mild Mild West, image credit Morgane Bigault

Destination Bristol, a partnership for UK city of Bristol and the surrounding area of South Gloucestershire, works to raise the profile of the Bristol city region as a world-class place to visit through the Visit Bristol brand.

While the Coronavirus pandemic means all of Bristol's attractions are temporarily closed, there are still ways to experience the city's rich history online including :

Banksy tour

Bristol is world-renowned for its vibrant street art, with political satire adorning many of its walls.

A virtual Banksy tour offers the chance to see the anonymous street artist's murals including his 2020 Valentine piece, articles with photos about the Banksy vs Bristol Museum show and his Dismaland 'theme park' in Weston-Super-Mare,.

www.apps.apple.com/gb/app/banksy-bristol-trail/id1111573684

Bristol Museum and Art gallery

Another way to view a Banksy is to go to Bristol Museum and Art Gallery's virtual tour and see his 'Paintpot Angel' as well as the museum's Egypt and Assyria galleries.

- www.visitbristol.co.uk
- press@visitbristol.co.uk

SS Great Britain

Brunel's iconic Victorian luxury ship, SS Great Britain, is Bristol's top visitor attraction and its virtual tour offers the chance to 'wander round' the ship's decks and learn about this pioneering ship that changed the world.

www.my.matterport.com/show/?m=Fpab2R2NAhR

Bristol History podcast

Discover Bristol History is a magazine podcast produced by locals in collaboration with Bristol Cable.

It has episodes and interviews outlining the city's history including the role of Caribbean migration in the city, Polling day in 18th Century Bristol, natural history of the West Country and Bristol's overseas trade, history and street art.

www.thebristolcable.org/bristol-history-podcast



Amsterdam & Partners brings the city a little closer









From its earliest days, the Dutch canal-side city of Amsterdam has been a bustling hub of commerce that has welcomed other cultures with open arms.

During COVID 19, Amsterdam & Partners has transformed its online channel https://www.iamsterdam.com/en to offer virtual museum tours, 'living room' performances and tips to entertain the kids online.

There's also the chance to take a look around the Amsterdam Area in 360 degrees, with a series of virtual reality including the North Sea beaches, tulip fields of the Flower Strip, castles, shopping streets and, of course, windmills.

The offering will be constantly updated to bring Amsterdam a little bit closer to the people.

www.iamsterdam.com/en Manon Zondervan at M.Zondervan@iamsterdam.com

The Wild Atlantic Writing Awards'

Ireland Writing Retreat, based in Donegal, has launched the Wild Atlantic Writing Awards', including travel and food writing, with almost 3,000 euro worth of prizes.

The Retreat, which has been listed among the Top Ten artistic retreats of any kind in Europe by The Guardian newspaper, hosts week-long retreats several times a year in Donegal, Paris and along the Black Sea in Romania.

It has attracted participants, tutors and authors from countries as diverse as New Zealand, Sweden, Canada, France, Iceland, the US, Australia and the UK. The Wild Atlantic Writing Awards' are seen as providing an interesting challenge for journalists and others who have no choice but to stay at home for the next few weeks due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Creative nonfiction

For a creative nonfiction award,' participants must write a feature of not more than 500 words on any subject with travel or food writing welcome.

Flash fiction

The flash fiction category is open to all genres with a similar 500 word limit.

The winning entries will receive 500 euro in cash, plus 990 euro in the form of free participation to one of our retreats, including all daily excursions.

With the writer's permission, each winning entries will be published on the 'Ireland Writing Retreat' website, with short bio.

- www.irelandwritingretreat.com/writing-competition
- Sean Hillen at sean@worlditineraries.co



Virtual Helsinki

Finland



Helsinki Marketing has produced Virtual Helsinki, which offers a digital tour of the Helsinki City centre.

The experience starts from the empire-style Senate Square and the White Church and continues to the home of architect Alvar Aalto, the father of Nordic design.

It finishes with the chance to view the city skyline and the nature of Lonna Island.

- www.myhelsinki.fi/en/see-and-do/digital-experiences-and-live-broadcasts-from-helsinki
- Leena Karppinen at leena.karppinen@hel.fi

Absence makes the heart grow fonder – for Scotland



VisitScotland's marketing team, working from their own homes, have produced a short film to remind visitors what Scotland has to offer, trigger memories of previous visits and highlight it will still be there when travel is possible again.

Built around the idea that absence makes the heart grow fonder, the film features stunning visuals from Skara Brae in Orkney to Loch Ken in Dumfries and Galloway and from Airlie Monument in Angus to Dunnottar Castle in Aberdeenshire.

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRja3_xMo0&feature=youtu.be and www.visitscotland.com
- Janice Macgregor Janice.macgregor@visitscotland.com



All-American Armchair Adventures



Visit The USA is suggesting a selection of 'all-American armchair adventures to educate and entertain global travellers currently spending time at home, which should also spark wanderlust and inspire future travel planning.

GoUSA TV

In 2019 *Visit The USA* launched GoUSA TV, a free on-demand video-streaming service offering American travel content to audiences worldwide.

Viewers can explore the USA's great outdoors, food hotspots and road trips along with Brand USA's second giant screen film, America's Musical Journey.

GoUSA TV updates its travel content every Thursday and is free without subscription.

www.visittheusa.co.uk/gousa-tv

The National Parks

Google Arts & Culture is hosting interactive documentaries on a number of contrasting U.S. National Parks including :

- Kenai Fjords, Alaska
- Hawaii Volcanoes, Hawaii
- Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico
- Bryce Canyon, Utah, and
- Dry Tortugas, Florida.

Audiences can get 360-degree video tours through some of the United States' most remote and breath-taking landscapes, with a local ranger as guide. Visit

www.artsandculture.withgoogle.com/enus/national-parks-service/parks

Opera, orchestra and Broadway

The Metropolitan Opera in New York will be free-streaming encore productions from its Live in HD series; the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, is sharing performances through free video rebroadcasts and livestreams and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO) has made DSO Replay, its on-demand video streaming archive of past performances, free while live concerts are not running.

Broadway HD has an on-demand streaming platform with hundreds of productions.

www.metopera.org/user-information/nightlymet-opera-streams/ www.seattlesymphony.org/live www.livefromorchestrahall.vhx.tv

- www.visittheusa.co.uk
- Josie Self at JSelf@thebrandusa.co.uk



Meet the Alliance members

Max Hartshorne

Max Hartshorne has been the editor of *GoNOMAD Travel* since 2002, and is sheltering in South Deerfield, Massachusetts - his beautiful part of the US.



GoNOMAD offers the best in off-the-beatenpath travel articles from around the world, with a focus on lesser-known destinations.

He writes :

"I am doing well, planning advertising campaigns, renewing work with customers in Italy and France, publishing new and different types of articles, and hearing from writers, editors, and family every day.

"Even people who never call are calling, even those who thought there were too dumb to use Skype or Facebook video messenger are learning. "And we are all walking, keeping our safe distance and trying to make sense of this mind-blowing event.

"I remain optimistic that this will pass and that the pent-up travel industry will roar back.

"We can pause like this if we all do it.

"And after we flatten the curve, we can all resume our fantastic travel lives."

- www.gonomad.com
- Max Hartshorne at
 - editorial@gonomad.com

Akram Al-Gaolahi

Akram Al-Gaolahi is a journalist, media and web developer and community activist.

tourism and travel.



Nick Kontis

advertising and marketing and tourism filmmaking. A human rights and community activist in many activities including: relief, conflict resolution, preservation of monuments and human heritage.

He has worked in many local, Arab and

channels and websites, specialising in

Akram is an expert in tourism media and marketing, promotional content preparation,

foreign media newspapers, magazines, TV

He is now also Manager of Tourism Media in Yemen and Editor in Chief of the Yemen Tourism Magazine & Director of its travel newspaper.

Akram Al-Gaolahi at algaolahi@gmail.com



Nick Kontis is a travel journalist, broadcaster and author and founder of *Stellar World Hotels*, which is a website specialising in unique, boutique, lifestyle, or luxury properties throughout the world.

Nick is seeking contributors who would be able to produce a feature on the property for a couple nights stay.

His luxury hotel writers are global travellers who delve the scenes of destinations and pride themselves on unbiased hotel reviews. For Alliance members interested in contributing, Nick can provide a profile and image on the Stellar Hotels website with a link back to their own site.

- www.stellarworldhotels.com
 Nick Kontis at
 - nick@circletheplanet.com



Ja'Vonne and Gene Harley

Traveling Culturati, which is a weekly travel show on Sirius/XM #141, is hosted by Ja'Vonne Harley, with Gene Harley as Executive Producer.



Ja'Vonne Harley has over 10 years of broadcasting and 30 years experience in travel and event management.

Ja'Vonne and Gene are inviting Alliance members to get in touch with stories or ideas that they can then consider featuring on the *Traveling Culturati*.



There are segments on :

- travel news, features and tips
- travel fitness and medical tourism, along with
- live shows from destinations

They will also be happy to hear from those comfortable being interviewed on a radio show that airs four times each week.

Ja'Vonne and Gene highlight a quote from Mark Twain :

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

- www.TravelingCulturati.com
- javonne@travelingculturati.com
- Gene@TravelingCulturati.com

Paul Stevenson

Paul is Editor of Haunted Magazine, which started in 2009 and is now print & digital.



He is also a ghost hunter.

Paul says :

"We love haunted islands, haunted locations, haunted hotels, haunted places to stay & to feature them in the magazine from time to time.

"I'm married with twin 12-year-old girls & go to work for a rest AND at night investigate the paranormal.

"The beauty of ghost hunting is that you never know what is going to happen. We've seen & heard things that I can't explain but at the end of the day you could be walking around locations that may or may not be haunted using gadgets that may or may not work and trying to communicate with ghosts that may or may not exist.

"The magazine is for all lovers of the paranormal, not science-y, preachy, just a good roller coaster ride for all things spooky."

• www.haunteddigitalmagazine.com

• Paul Stevenson at paul@hauntedmagazine.co.uk

Introduce yourself

Alliance journalists wishing to be included in the Meet the Alliance members section should send :

- a brief biog (150 words max)
- images if appropriate
- any web link and,
- an email address

To : Ashley Gibbins at Ashley@itwalliance.com





Making a difference in today's world



When the cloud clears

When the world has defeated the COVID 19 virus, its people will be eager to embrace the joys and benefits of travel once again.

The International Travel Writers Alliance will continue to issue its twice-monthly bulletin of long-life information and images in that will be relevant when that happy day comes.

The Alliances travel industry partners and their agencies are working tirelessly to be ready when the time comes and they will be delighted to hear from our journalists now.



Working with the Alliance

Riviera Nayarit





Riviera Nayarit, located on Mexico's Pacific coast is an excellent autumn/winter destination.

The region is part of the State of Nayarit in Mexico, just north of Puerto Vallarta International Airport.

It extends from Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit's most developed area, north to the border of the state of Sinaloa. Surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, Riviera Nayarit boasts approximately 186 miles of beaches, mountains, nature sanctuaries and golden sand.

The area enjoys an average yearly temperature of 27 degrees, and offers a range of new boutique properties, virgin beaches fringed with lush vegetation, authentic Huichol art and culture and an abundance of authentic seafood restaurants.

The Huichol culture

The Huichol culture is an important part of the Riviera Nayarit experience for travellers, and there are several destination-wide initiatives in place that support cultural preservation and sustainable growth for the native community.

One of the main ways the destination does this is through the Huichol Tour, which takes travellers behind the scenes to experience the villages, ceremonial sites, rituals and traditions of the Huichol first-hand.



Riviera Nayarit



The hotspots



Sayulita

Sayulita is being heralded as the *trendiest town in Mexico*, thanks to its friendly, laid-back atmosphere, surfing beaches, the authentic Huichol art of the area and its boho-chic style that permeates its streets, shops, galleries and hotels.

Punta de Mita

Historically significant as the site of the ancient Huichol Indians' annual Spring festival, Punta de Mita is situated at the northern tip of Banderas Bay.

It has several fine restaurants, luxury residences and several luxury hotels including the Relais et Chateau Imanta Resorts Punta de Mita and the W Punta de Mita.

The Historic Port of San Blas

The port city of San Blas is a rapidly growing tourism destination, thanks to its many beaches, colonial history, Spanish fort, excellent restaurants and an abundance of migratory birds which attract ornithologists from around the world.

- www.RivieraNayarit.com
- Marta Moya at marta@wearelotus.co.uk



The La Tovara National Park is a federally protected mangrove forest with abundant wildlife including birds, crocodiles and turtles.

Rincón de Guayabitos

Rincon is a popular but less developed beach resort town with a variety of small hotels and restaurants as well as fishing and diving excursions, boat trips to tiny offshore islands and a gorgeous beach.

Marietas Islands

Situated in Banderas Bay, the Marietas Islands are a wildlife sanctuary for endangered bird species as well as rare coral reefs.

Boat tours from Nuevo Vallarta to Punta de Mita are available for snorkelling, diving, swimming, birdwatching and the Hidden Beach.

Hotels opening in the destination this year will include:

Conrad Punta de Mita

Conrad Hotels & Resorts is expected to debut a 325-room Conrad Punta de Mita, in Litibu, an exclusive private community.

This will be Hilton's first Conrad-branded resort property in Mexico.

www.conradpuntademita.com

One&Only Mandarina

One&Only Mandarina will make its debut in the destination with 104 villas, as well as 54 Private Homes, amongst the first One&Only residences in the world.

www.oneandonlyresorts.com

Mandarina Polo and Equestrian Club

Mandarina will open the Mandarina Polo and Equestrian Club, where riders of all ages and abilities will gather from around the world to learn, practice or compete.

www.discovermandarina.com

Occidental Nuevo Vallarta

Occidental Nuevo Vallarta by Barceló Hotel Group will complete the properties extension project, adding an additional 92 new rooms. The new rooms will offer enviable views of the Pacific Ocean.

www.barcelo.com/en-gb/occidental-hotels



News

Hotels helping during the crisis



<image><image>

The K Club Ireland

The K Club, one of Ireland's most exclusive hotels, is located 30 minutes from Dublin in County Kildare.

The 18th century French-inspired chateauturned hotel lies in 500

During the hotel's short-term closure, the estate owner Michael Fetherston, has offered to allocate the 134 rooms to healthcare workers separated from their families or people with illness.

www.kclub.ie

Dromoland Castle

Ireland

The historic Dromoland Castle is located on a country estate surrounded by forests, lakes and rolling green hills.

- www.prefferedhotels.com
- Antonia Robinson at ARobinson@preferredhotels.com

To help parents entertain now-homeschooled children, the hotel has teamed up with Limerick artist Una Heaton to give arts and crafts lessons on the hotel's YouTube channel (@DromolandCastle).

www.dromoland.ie

Bobby Hotel, Nashville USA



The Bobby boutique hotel in downtown Nashville, offers travel-inspired guestrooms and a retrofitted 1956 bus as a roof bar.

Music is at the heart and soul of the hotel and is integral to the design, programming and amenities.

It is known as one of the best venues in the city for live performances and impromptu music sets and to keep the 'music and energy alive', the hotel has launched a new music-focused IGTV channel (@bobbyhotel).

A host of Music City's musicians and songwriters will be sharing new music streamed live to people's homes during the Coronavirus crisis.

www.bobbyhotel.com

VIVA Cruises









VIVA Cruises has produced a virtual 360° tour of VIVA TIARA, its newest ship.

VIVA Cruises offers cruising to Europe's most popular destinations that follow the great rivers including the Danube, Elbe, Moselle, Rhine, Rhône, Seine and the Main-Danube Canal.

VIVA TIARA was thoroughly refurbished during the recent winter season and the ship now features 76 light-flooded outside cabins - most of them with French balconies, which can accommodate 153 passengers. All of the cabins have been completely redesigned and public spaces such as the restaurant, bar and wellness area were also given a makeover.

- http://scylla360.ch/viva-tiara-client/viva-tiara-client.html and www.viva-cruises.com/en
- Helen Coop at helen.coop@fourcommunications.com

Petitfute.com now available in English and Spanish

Petit Fute, the first French publisher of worldwide travel and leisure guides is now online in English and Spanish.



Le Petit Futé is offering its content free to online users through a multilingual site, starting with English and Spanish versions.

• Jean-Mary Marchal at marchal@petitfute.com

The site provides information and advice on transport, leisure, accommodation, catering, outings, shopping and attractions.

The implementation of this multilingual version was made possible by the translation service DeepL, which offers one of the best in machine translation.

While acknowledging that English and Spanish-speaking Internet users may find some linguistic or stylistic shortcomings, Petit Fute believes that this translation tool will now make it possible to share its content effectively.

petitfute.com :

- in French on www.petitfute.com
- in English at www.petitfute.co.uk
- in Spanish at www.petitfute.es



What's on

The annual Miss Pacific Islands pageant



The annual Miss Pacific Islands pageant is still pencilled in for Samoa this November, following the win of Miss Samoa, Fonoifafo Nancy McFarland (below), Miss Samoa, in 2019.



Miss Samoa and Miss Pacific Islands pageants have been a part of Samoa's vibrant culture and traditions for over 30 years.

- www.samoa.travel
- Sebastian Sarrasin at samoa@representationplus.co.uk

Taking place in Apia each September, the Miss Samoa is dedicated to supporting opportunities for young Samoan women.

The winner also works as a national ambassador for the islands during her year of reign.

The winner of Miss Samoa goes on to compete at the Miss Pacific Islands pageant, which serves as a platform to promote the entire Pacific Islands region.

Each year, representatives from up to 12 Pacific Islands compete in the Miss Pacific Islands pageant. Last year's contestants were from American Samoa, the Cook Islands, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tahiti, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Wallis & Futuna.

This year's festivities are set to coincide with the celebration of 30 years of the Teuila Festival, Samoa's biggest annual event showcasing the best of the country's music, dance, food, and craft.



A reason to write about

Lepogo Lodges at Noka Camp South Africa







Lepogo Lodges' Noka Camp, which is one of Africa's few entirely not-for-profit safari lodges, is adding to its eco-credentials by working with local and global charity organisations to offset their guests' carbon footprint.

Lepogo Lodges calculates the carbon emissions resulting from each guest's journey, from the time they leave their home to the moment they return.

The figure is converted into a monetary value which is then donated by Lepogo

Lodges into one of three conservation projects chosen by the guest.

Community Stove Project – A community outreach programme

Lepogo Lodges works with the Lapalala Wilderness School's Outreach Programme to launch the Community Stove Project.

This sees high efficiency stoves donated to the local community, to help the environment and improve health.

The new stoves reduce the wood used in each household by an estimated 2.5 tons per year and during a stove's estimated fiveyear life span, its usage will save 30 trees and 12 tonnes of CO2.

South Africa Forest Trust – A biodiversity enhancement programme

The South African Reforestation Trust is a not-for-profit organisation and platform bringing landowners, institutions, companies and individuals together to plant and extend indigenous forest eco-systems.

The trust works with four forest sites which require rehabilitative intervention – the Overberg, Grootvadersbosch Conservancy near Swellendam, Wilderness and the Boland.



Lepogo Lodges









Stand for Trees – A global programme

Stand for Trees aims to protect the world's most spectacular forest landscapes, surrounding communities and inhabiting wildlife and runs 16 conservation projects across Northern Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Peru and Brazil.

- www.lepogolodges.com
- Marielle Ruiz at Marielle Ruiz mruiz@grifcopr.com

Other initiatives

Lepogo Lodges also supports local communities by helping them start businesses, which supply products for the lodge and on-site curio shop.

The property is also supporting the conservation of cheetah and is working with Lapalala to establish the reserve as a centre of excellence for the release of wild cheetah.

Lepogo Lodges' Noka Camp

The camp lies within the 50,000-hectare, malaria-free, 'big five', Lapalala Wilderness Reserve and consists of five stilted villas, which are joined by a main lodge, all atop a 100ft cliff overlooking the winding Palala River below and the endless bush ahead.

The camp is entirely off-grid, with all energy self-generated by a 250m solar walkway.



Verbier, Val de Bagnes and La Tzoumaz Switzerland



Verbier, with Val de Bagnes and La Tzoumaz, is located at 1,500m in the Val de Bagnes on south-facing plateau and views of the Massif des Combins.



The winter sports region extends from Le Châble at 850m up to Mont-Fort at 3,330m and, between November to April, 410km of slopes of varying levels and off-piste trails make Verbier 4 Vallées the largest ski area in Switzerland.

- www.verbier.ch
- Elise Farquet at e.farquet@verbierpromotion.ch

After dark skiers and snowboarders take advantage of the aprèsski and cosmopolitan, laid-back nightlife.

The resort also stages a number of major sports, cultural, artistic and gastronomic events:

- Polaris Electronic Music Festival (November/December)
- Verbier Art Summit (January/February)
- Verbier Xtreme (March/April)
- Haute Cuisine (April), and

the Patrouille des Glaciers ski mountaineering race (April/May)

The winter press pack : www.verbier.ch/UserFiles/File/Verbier_Winter-Press-Kit-2019_20_EN_spreads_lowres.pdf



Trekking and walking in the Carpathian Mountains Romania



The Mountains of Romania by Janneke Klop, which is a new guidebook by Cicerone, describes 27 short treks in the Romanian mountains.



Romania is a southeastern European country known for the forested region of Transylvania, ringed by the Carpathian Mountains.

Its preserved medieval towns include Sighişoara, and there are many fortified churches and castles, notably clifftop Bran Castle, long associated with the Dracula legend.

Also included is an ascent of Moldoveanu, Romania's highest peak at 2544m.

The routes showcase Romania's stunning, diverse landscapes and offer an insight into the country's rich history and traditional rural life.

There is advice to help you plan a trip and organise the logistics of the walk or trek

- www.cicerone.co.uk
- For review copies : Hannah at hannah@cicerone.co.uk



Some routes take advantage of the network of mountain huts and others the chance to camp in wild locations.

The graded routes, mostly on waymarked trails, take in rolling hills, craggy karst peaks, glacial lakes and Europe's last virgin forests, with other highlights including Transylvanian castles, wooden churches and the Sapte Scari (Seven Ladders) and Turda Gorges.

Historic towns such as the medieval Saxon towns of Brasov and Sibiu and the spa resort of

Vatra Dornei offer easy access to the mountains; other routes visit remote villages that have changed little over the centuries, and where self-sufficiency is still very much the way of life.

Janneke Klop has been exploring Romania since 2005 and writes about her Romanian adventures at www.roamaniac.com.



Self-drive across Namibia









Windows on the Wild is to offer a 16-night self-drive across Namibia to experience the African country's mountains, canyons, coastlines, desert dunes, salt pans and game reserves.



On the way there will be the chance to encounter rhino, big cats, zebra and elephants and one of the largest and most important concentrations of ancient rock art in Africa.

Accommodations across the itinerary range from boutique luxury hotels and villas to rock-and-thatch chalets, desert lodges and luxury tented rooms.

Day and night game drives are included at most of the lodges and additional excursions are available to add-on for activities such as paragliding, quad-biking, and guided nature walks.

The itinerary begins in Namibia's cosmopolitan capital of Windhoek and continues to the Naukluft Mountains, Sossuvlei, Sesriem, Swakopmund, along the Skelton Coast to Twyfelfontein and the Etosha National Park, before returning back to Windhoek.

- www.windowsonthewild.com/africa/namibia and www.windowsonthewild.com
- Zoe Anderson at zoe@goshpr.co.uk



A place to stay

Preferred Hotels & Resorts



Preferred Hotels & Resorts represents more than 750 hotels, resorts, and residences across 85 countries.

New members to its portfolio include :

Klaus K Hotel, Helsinki, Finland



The Empire Brunei Brunei Darussalam



Located in Helsinki's historic city centre, the 171-room Klaus K Hotel takes its design cues from the Finnish national epic, The Kalevala, the mythological story that the world emerged from seven eggs.

The egg shape is characterised throughout the hotel, most prominently in the check-in desk design, which features a halo of antler-like artwork, and in one of the Sky Suites, which boasts an egg-shaped bed.

Guests can opt for one of the Art Rooms inspired by local artists or indulge with a stay in *The Nympheus Suite*, which pays tribute to designer William Turner through its ornate décor and textiles depicting his 1915 illustration of water lilies and birds.

www.preferredhotels.com/property/klaus-k-hotel-248443

Set on 445 coastal acres on the South China Sea amidst tropical rainforests, *The Empire Brunei* has 522 rooms, seven international restaurants, and five swimming pools.

There are also 16 secluded villas featuring gardens, living areas, and balconies with ocean views.

Experiences include stand-up paddle boarding at the Grand Lagoon, an eight-lane bowling hall, a deluxe spa, a three-screen cinema, and almost two miles of private beaches.

Golfers can test their handicap on the 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature Golf Course at The Country Club, which offers night golf and a golf academy.

www.preferredhotels.com/property/empire-brunei-243377



Preferred Hotels & Resorts

(cont)



Live Aqua Urban Resort San Miguel de Allende San Miguel de Allende, Mexico



The Serras Barcelona, Spain



The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Osaka Midosuji Osaka, Japan



Live Aqua is located in the cultural heart of San Miguel de Allende, one of Mexico's most vibrant destinations and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The 153-room Live Aqua Urban Resort San Miguel de Allende has five distinct culinary venues, including :

- Zibu, which offers a unique Mex-Thai menu, and
- the Spice Market, which creates spicy, Southeast Asianinspired dishes.

www.preferredhotels.com/property/live-aqua-urban-resort-sanmiguel-de-allende-236523

The Serras is located on the Port of Barcelona with views out to the Mediterranean and within the Gothic Quarter neighbourhood

It offers 28 artfully designed soundproof guestrooms and suites.

The a façade was built in 1846 by 19th century architect Francesc Daniel Molina, famous for his work on Barcelona's Plaça Reial, and which housed one of Pablo Picasso's first studios.

The Cathedral of Barcelona, Las Ramblas, the Basilica de Santa Maria del Mar and beaches are within walking distance.

www.preferredhotels.com/property/serras-243211

The Royal Park Hotel Iconic Osaka Midosuji is due to open in 2020 in Osaka's central district.

All 352 guestrooms and suites are located on the 16th floor or higher, offering views of the surrounding cityscape.

The guest relations team can help visitors explore the neighbourhood scene where they can sample local favourites like okonomiyaki (savoury pancakes) and oshizushi (traditional 'box pressed' sushi).

www.the-royalpark.jp/ic/osakamidosuji/en/



Preferred Hotels & Resorts

(cont)



Drei Mohren Hotel Augsburg, Greater Munich Area, Germany



Paramount Hotel Dubai Dubai, United Arab Emirates



The on-property Michelin-starred restaurant Sartory – named after Augsburg's famed 18th-century chef – is open to only 24 guests each evening and serves refined French cuisine showcasing fresh, local ingredients.

Located in one of Germany's oldest cities, the Drei Mohren Hotel has 132 sophisticated guestrooms and suites in the bustling Maximilianstrasse, close to top attractions including the Goldener

www.preferredhotels.com/property/drei-mohren-hotel-225396

Saal and the Fuggerei Museum.

Inspired by Old Hollywood glamour and Dubai design aesthetic, Paramount Hotel Dubai is the region's first Paramount property.

The hotel offers 823 guestrooms each with in-room blockbuster cinema experience through vintage Hollywood artwork, movie set-inspired lighting, and high-tech entertainment systems.

Movie buffs will enjoy the themed suites, which pay homage to classic Paramount Pictures, including The Godfather tribute Don Corleone Suite, the diva-inspired Carole Lombard Suite and the Great Gatsby-era Charleston Suite.

Other facilities include a private dine-in cinema, a live entertainment stage, a chocolate lab, and a 1920s speakeasy bar.

www.preferredhotels.com/property/paramount-hotel-dubai-244028

Other hotels that have joined the Preferred Hotels & Resorts portfolio in recent months

Alma Resort (Cam Ranh, Vietnam) Ayana Midplaza, JAKARTA (Jakarta, Indonesia) De Zalze Lodge (Stellenbosch, South Africa)

Downtown Grand Hotel & Casino (Las Vegas,USA)

Excelsior Belvedere Hotel (Ischia, Italy) H10 Villa de la Reina (Madrid, Spain) Hotel C Stockholm (Stockholm, Sweden) Hyde Beach House (Hollywood, Florida, USA) LA Résidence Paris (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France) Locanda Rossa (Capalbio, Italy) Marina Hotel Kuwait (Salmiyia, Kuwait)

The Fullerton Hotel Sydney (Sydney, Australia

The Guardsman (London, United Kingdom) The Londoner (London, United Kingdom) Ultima Courchevel (Courchevel, France) Villa Dagmar (Stockholm, Sweden) WelcomHotel Amritsar (Amritsar, India)

- www.PreferredHotels.com
- Antonia Robinson at arobinson@preferredhotels.com



Schgaguler Hotel, Dolomites



The Schgaguler Hotel is located in the in the UNESCO heritage-protected mountain village of Castelrot in Northeastern Italy.





It offers 'Alpine style with a Scandinavian and Japanese contemporary spin'.

The 42-room property overlooks the Alpe di Siusi and offers a Alpine-meets-Mediterranean culinary experience, as well as a spa with a variety of saunas, two indoor pools, an outdoor whirlpool, a gym, massage and mud-bath treatments.

- www.designhotels.com/hotels/italy/south-tyrol/castelrotto/schgaguler-hotel
- Design Hotels Public Relations at press@designhotels.com



The Alpe di Siusi is in the immediate vicinity of the skiing area of Val Gardena and the historical village Castelrotto.



Bulletin box : Frankfurt, Germany









The central German city of Frankfurt sits on the river Main and is a major financial hub and home to the European Central Bank.

It's the birthplace of writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, whose former home is now the Goethe House Museum. The reconstructed Altstadt (Old Town) is the city's major focal point.

Visitor highlights in Frankfurt and the region include :

Frankfurt

Take in a visit to Sachsenhausen, the traditional apple wine restaurants, the 'new' Old Town and the reopened Jewish Museum.

Sachsenhausen : www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Attractions-Region-FrankfurtRheinMain/Old-Sachsenhausen

Old Townm : www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Attractions-Region-FrankfurtRheinMain/New-Frankfurt-Old-Town

Jewish Museum : www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en/Discover-Experience/Points-of-Interest/Jewish-Frankfurt/Jewish-Culture

The Museum Embankment Festival, which is Europe's largest cultural festival, takes place annually in August.

www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en/Media/Events/Museum-Embankment-Festival-2021?value=2021-08-27 Culinary guided tours of Frankfurt



The city also offers a range of culinary guided tours with the chance to try its traditional green sauce.

www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en/Discover-Experience/Cuisine www.frankfurttourismus.de/en/DiscoverExperience/Cuisine/Greensa uce



Frankfurt

(cont)









Miltenberg

The medieval, half-timbered Bavarian city of Miltenberg is home to some of Germanys finest breweries including the Faust Brewery, which offers brewery tours.

www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/Attraktionen-der-Region/Miltenberg

Aschaffenburg

The Bavarian city of Aschaffenburg has the Johannisburg Castle and the Pompeiianum, a Roman villa inspired by Pompeii.

The Schlappeseppel serves traditional German food and beer.

www.info-aschaffenburg.de/en/tourism.html

www.frankfurt-rhein-

main.de/en/Region/Aschaffenburg/Pompeiianum-the-Roman-Villanorth-of-the-Alps

www.schlappeseppel-ab.de

Seligenstadt

The town of Seligenstadt has narrow alleys and half-timbered houses and Glaab's Brewery, which also offers brewery tours including a magical brewery tour with a real magician!

The Einhardbasilika is a former Benedictine abbey.

www.frankfurt-rhein-

main.de/en/Region/Aschaffenburg/Johannisburg-Palace www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Region/District-of-Offenbach/Seligenstadt www.glaabsbraeu.de

Schlosshotel Kronberg Castle Hotel



The Schlosshotel Kronberg castle hotel is a good place to stay in the area.

www.schlosshotel-kronberg.com/en/

The Rhine

Frankfurt provides a gateway to The Rheingau and Rüdesheim and Bingen, two pearls along the Rhine in The Upper Middle Rhine Valley.

www.rheingau.de/languages/english www.ruedesheim.de/en/ www.bingen.de/en/



Frankfurt

(cont)













The Ring Ticket and the Romantic Tour

The Ring Ticket and the Romantic Tour are two options for discovering the area in a day, including the cable car, chairlift and boat tour on the Rhine along with a visit to the Rheinstein Castle).]

The St. Hildegard Abbey close to Rüdesheim, has Benedictine nuns making wine and other products which can be tasted when you visit.

www.ruedesheim.de/cablecar

Wine tasting

There are a range of wine and vineyard options including the WINEWALK and the WINETIME.

The Eberbach Abbey, where *In the Name of the Rose* with Sean Connery was filmed, offers wine tasting tours through the abbey with a restaurant in the former stables

www.ruedesheim.de/en/wine-culinary-art/wine-experience www.kloster-eberbach.de/en/eberbach-monastery/ www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Region/Rheingau-Taunus/Abbey-of-St.-Hildegard

Mainz, Wiesbaden and Bad Homburg

The city of Mainz has the Gutenberg Museum, with the original printing press as well as the first printed bible. experience.

www.mainzplus.com/en www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Region/Mainz2/Gutenberg-Museum

Wiesbaden and Bad Homburg are two of the most traditional spa cities in the country.

- www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en
- Charlotte Jakobsen at charlotte.jakobsen@tourcomm-germany.com

Bad Nauheim also hosts the annual International Elvis Festival.

Close to Bad Homburg you will also find the museum of Saalburg, a rebuilt Roman fort along the former frontier of the Roman Empire called Limes.

www.wiesbaden.de/en/tourism/themes-tours/healthwellbeing/index.php www.kur-royal.de/en/ www.bad-nauheim.de/en www.saalburgmuseum.de/en/

Hanau

The city of Hanau hosts the German Fairytale Road and is the birthplace of the Brothers Grimm.

www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.com/en/yourjourney/destinations/places-and-regions/view/hanau/ www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.com/en/?lang=en Darmstadt

Darmstadt is know as the city of Art Nouveau : www.darmstadt-tourismus.de/en.html

The RheinMainCard

www.frankfurt-rhein-main.de/en/Information-Planning/RheinMainCard

The Frankfurt Tourist Office offers 12, 24 and 48 hour itineries for the city and its region.



Bulletin box : Spring time in the Celtic Routes









The Celtic Routes takes in Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, Wales and Wicklow, Waterford and Wexford, Ireland.

Every spring the Routes offer verdant meadows, rolling hillsides, leafy woodlands, dense forests, landscaped gardens and grassy river banks.

Locations include :

Mount Congreve, Waterford

Ambrose Congreve won 13 Gold Medals at the Chelsea Flower Show for his gardens.

Today they comprise around 70 acres of intensively-planted woodland, a 4-acre walled garden and 16km of walkways.

The entire collection consists of over 3,000 different trees and shrubs, including 2,000 Rhododendrons, 600 Camellias, 300 Acer cultivars and 600 conifers with many more tender species contained in the Georgian glasshouse.

www.mountcongreve.com

Wells House & Gardens, Wexford

Wells House & Gardens was originally created in the late 17th century, and in the 1830s, the English architect Daniel Robertson redesign the house and gardens as it looks today.

www.wellshouse.ie

Llandeilo and the Tywi Valley, Carmarthenshire

The market town of Llandeilo, with its narrow streets and painted Georgian houses has, in the surrounding Tywi Valley, some of the finest scenery in Wales.

Perched on a 90-metre limestone crag, Carreg Cennen dominates the skyline for miles. Dryslwyn Castle sits on a rocky hill and the Elizabethan gardens of Aberglasney and the National Botanic Garden are nearby along with National Trust properties including the Neo-Gothic Paxton's Tower.

Minwear Woods, Pembrokeshire

Minwear Woods is a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, near Narberth. Located close to the Cleddau Estuary, the combination of salt and fresh water provides a varied habitat for wildlife, with waterside birds like herons and kingfishers along with the great spotted woodpeckers and tree creepers.

The woodland also sustains a wide range of flora and, in spring, the woodland paths come alive with bright yellow lesser celandine and bluebells



Spring time in the Celtic Routes

(cont)





Waterford Greenway, Waterford

The former Waterford City to Dungarvan railway line has been transformed into a 46km off-road cycling and walking trail, taking in 11 bridges, three viaducts and a 400 metre-long tunnel.

There's also the 9th century Woodstown Viking settlement, the ornamental gardens at Mount Congreve and the Waterford & Suir Valley Heritage Railway.

The area also has the River Suir, Comeragh Mountains, the Copper Coast and Dungarvan Bay.

www.waterfordgreenwaybikehire.com

Wicklow Way, Wicklow

Just south of Dublin, County Wicklow, which is known as the Garden of Ireland, is a wild expanse of coastline, woodland and imposing mountains through which runs the country's most popular walking trail.

- www.celticroutes.irish
- Kara Williams at kara.williams@workingword.co.uk



The 127 knm Wicklow Way, Ireland's oldest marked trail, crosses the Dublin and Wicklow uplands, through the rolling hills of southwest County Wicklow, to finish in the small Wicklow-Carlow border village of Clonegal.

www.wicklowway.com

Tywi Valley Gardens, Carmarthenshire

The National Botanic Garden of Wales is a 560-acre complex that opened in 2000, with a range of themed gardens and the world's largest single-span.

Aberglasney Gardens is a formal walled gardens dating from Elizabethan times with a cloister garden at its heart.

www.discovercarmarthenshire.com/places/lla ndeilo-and-the-tywi-valley

Pumlumon, Ceredigion

Pumlumon, meaning 'Five Peaks', is a ridge of peaks in the Cambrian Mountains, with the highest the 752m Pen Pumlumon Fawr.



To the west, Snowdonia links to Preseli via the sweep of Cardigan Bay and, to the east, the Berwyn and Aran ranges connect to the Brecon Beacons along the English border.

Courtown Woodland Walks, Wexford

Although mainly a seaside village, the 60acre wood in Courtown provides a source of shade from the nearby beach.

During the 1860s and 70s, James Stopford, the 5th Earl of Courtown, established a pinetum in the grounds of Courtown House.

Trees remaining from his collection include a Californian redwood, swamp cypress, Japanese cedar, a cedar of Lebanon and numerous pines, yews and true cypresses.

Glendalough and Upper Lake, Wicklow

Carved out by glaciers during the last Ice Age, Glendalough or Gleann dá Loch, means 'Valley of the Two Lakes'.



One last thought : Virtual happy hours



The Dylan, Amsterdam

During these troubled times, some of the Alliance's hotel partners are offering the recipes for their bartenders signature cocktails for our journalists to try at home – with an invitation to try in person when the chance arises once again.

VILA VITA, the Algarve : Parc's Spicy Colada



VILA VITA Parc serves the delicious Spicy Colada in the House Bar, at the Clubhouse. Ingredients:

- 60ml Havana 7
- 10ml Ancho Reyes
- Tumi Ancho Reyes
 45ml Coconsult Current
- 45ml Coconut, Curry & Saffron milk
- 45ml pineapple & banana mix
- dried out chilli strings for the garnish



Ingredients for the Coconut, Curry and Saffron Milk:

- 1 teaspoon spicy curry mix
- 6 saffron strings
- 100 ml coconut milk
- 20 ml coconut purée
- 1 pinch of salt
- 0,5 gr lemon juice

Ingredients for the Pineapple & Banana Mix

- 50 gr Banana
- 45 gr of Pineapple
- 50 ml Lime Juice
- 100 ml Pineapple juice

Blend all your ingredients, and let it settle down over night so the saffron strings can provide that really rich colour. After that strain it out!

www.vilavitaparc.com/en/



Virtual happy hours

(cont)

The Peninsula Paris : Renaissance of the Golden Kingdom



Served normally in Bar Kléber, with its oak panelling, gilded mouldings, soaring ceilings and giant mirrors. Ingredients:

- 50ml of Gin
- 30ml of Umeshu
- 2 dashed of Peychaud's Bitters
- Ice cubes



Method:

Pour the Gin and the Umeshu in a mixing glass, add the ice cubes and finally the 2 dashes Bitter Peychaud, mix for 20 seconds.

Filter the ice cubes and pour into the glass, add an ice cube and a flower for decoration

www.peninsula.com/en/paris/5-star-luxury-hotel-16th-arrondissement

The Dylan, Amsterdam : Dylan Thomas cocktail



The Dylan's signature Dylan Thomas cocktail is usually served in the Bar Brasserie

Ingredients:

- 30cc Singleton Whisky
- 30cc Grand Marnier
- 30cc Manz Spatburgunder



- 10cc Monin vanilla
- 1 sugar cube with chocolate bitters
- Dash of chocolate alcohol

Method

Wet shake the Singleton, Grand Marnier, Spätburgunder and vanilla syrup.

Fine strain the liquid in a cognac glass. Place a sugar cube on a spoon and soak with chocolate bitters. Pour over the chocolate alcohol and burn until the sugar cube caramelises.

Stir the caramelised sugar into the glass and enjoy this warming drink!

www.dylanamsterdam.com/



Virtual happy hours (cont)



Grantley Hall, Yorkshire : From Vicky with Love

The Dylan, Amsterdam



Dating back to the 17th century, Grantley Hall has has hosted royalty, Members of Parliament, celebrities and socialites.

The signature cocktail in this Grade II listed hotel.



Ingredients:

- 50ml Gin
- 25ml Saint Germain
- 25ml lemon juice
- 20ml elderflower syrup
- 35ml aquafaba

Method:

To make your own aquafaba, cook dry chickpeas in water, strain the water off and leave it to cool.

For the cocktail, shake all ingredients with ice and strain into a cold martini glass.

www.grantleyhall.co.uk

7Pines Kempinski Ibiza : Es Vedrà cocktail, Ibiza



7Pines would like you to think of Ibizan sunsets overlooking Es Vedrà, as you sip the signature cocktail from its Pershing Yacht Terrace bar.



- 50 ml of Gin (infused with lemongrass if possible)
- 25 ml of lemon juice
- 15 ml of almond syrup
- Salty water and raspberry + lemon

Shake and strain and serve in Martini glass. Garnish with dried lemon and raspberry and enjoy!

www.7pines-ibiza.com/en/home







Royal Mansour Marrakech : Virgin Mojito

The Dylan, Amsterdam



This refreshing virgin cocktail is served at Le Jardin, Royal Mansour Marrakech's al fresco restaurant and bar.

- Ingredients:
 - 3 scoops lemon sorbet
 - 6 fresh mint leaves
 - 6cl of lemon juice
 - zest of 1 lemon

Method:

Combine all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Garnish with fresh mint leaves. www.royalmansour.com/en/

The Peninsula Chicago : Z Cocktail



The Peninsula Chicago's rooftop terrace Z Bar, overlooking the city of Chicago's Michigan Avenue offers the award-winning Z cocktail.

Ingredients:

- 4 cucumber slices
- 1 sprig mint or other soft herb such as basil or tarragon



- 2 ounces Gin we use Koval but any gin you have at home, or even vodka will work well
- ¾ ounce simple syrup we normally use Bergamot liqueur, but this works well also
- ³/₄ ounce fresh lime or lemon juice

Method:

In shaker, mix cucumber and mint

Add other ingredients and shake vigorously

Strain and serve up, garnish with either more fresh herbs, cucumber slices, or citrus wedges

www.peninsula.com/en/chicago/5-starluxury-hotel-downtown-chicago





Virtual happy hours (cont)

Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Lake Como : Terrace on Lake Como" by Hatem Alouane



This cocktail is a tribute to the TBar terrace overlooking Lake Como giving guests the opportunity to enjoy a unique landscape from the heart of the lake.



Ingredients:

- 8 cl. Bourbon Bullet
- 2 cl. Aperol
- 2 cl. Saffron
- 5 pink pepper berries

Method:

The cocktail is prepared in the shaker by combining all ingredients with a lot of ice. After this, shake vigorously and garnish with white celery.

www.grandhoteltremezzo.com/en/home/

Airelles Gordes, La Bastide : Ginger Cosmopolitan



Offering a slice of Provencal charm while virtually overlooking the Luberon Valley and enjoying this 'immune-system boosting' fresh Ginger Cosmopolitan.



Ingredients:

- 2oz (6cl) vodka
- 0.5oz. (1.5cl) Cointreau
- 0.5oz. (1.5cl) lemon juice
- 0.5 oz (1.5cl) ginger infusion
- 3oz. (9cl) cranberry juice

Method:

50cl Ginger Infusion: Cut 30 g of freshly peeled ginger in small cubes. Boil in 100cl water. Reduce to half. Mix and strain.

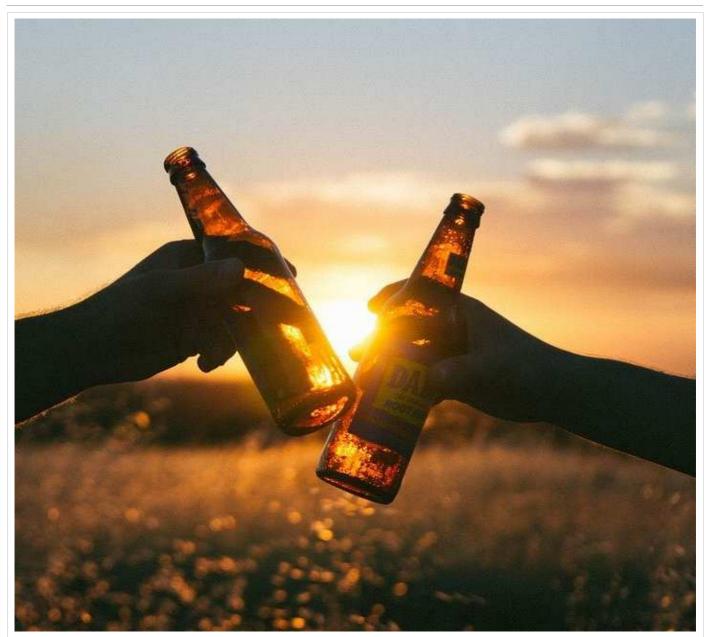
Pour all ingredients in a shaker. Shake hard and strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a ginger slice.

www.airelles.com/en/destination/gordeshotel

Clare Jackson at clare@masonrose.com



One last thought : ... and another!



International Travel Writers Alliance and AllWays Traveller



AllWays

Traveller

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The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

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