



## PRESS RELEASE



# CELEBRATE THE ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS NEAR OR FAR...

Whether you're seeking a Christmas filled with festive trimmings or an escape away from monotonous seasonal songs and tinsel, options are still available. Explore the traditions of Navidad in the heart of Barcelona, take a tailored tour of London's prime hot spots or celebrate on the sand dunes at newly launched Bahia Vik on Uruguay's most vibrant and idyllic costal town...

## THE ULTIMATE FESTIVE CHRISTMAS:

### UK & IRELAND

#### **FESTIVE AFTERNOON TEA AT THE WESTBURY: THE PERFECT RETAIL PICK-ME-UP IN DUBLIN THIS CHRISTMAS**

Just an hour's flight from the UK, Dublin is the ideal long weekend destination to visit in the run up to Christmas this year. You'll be sure to pick up presents for everyone - from high-end department stores on the capital's infamous Grafton Street to the chic 40 days & 40 nights Christmas market on St Stephen's Green (Midday - 8pm daily; 13 November - 23 December 2014), before retreating to The Westbury Hotel for a mid-shop glass of champagne or full Christmas afternoon tea experience. With views overlooking Grafton Street, The Gallery at The Westbury Hotel has a sublime afternoon tea this Christmas where guests can unwind on luxurious sofas with sandwiches including Honey baked Limerick ham, tomato and mustard relish on malt harvest bread; Bronze Turkey Breast Salad, Cranberry chutney on Brioche Roll; and Irish Oak smoked salmon and crab with lemon aioli on homemade soda bread. Hand made buttermilk cranberry and plain scones served with clotted cream and berry preserves are included along with minced pies. Available from 13<sup>th</sup> November. €45 for traditional Christmas afternoon tea (€55 includes champagne).

**HOW:** Five star The Westbury Hotel's central location adjacent to Grafton Street is second to none. Double rooms from €250 bed and breakfast. <http://www.doylecollection.com/hotels/the-westbury-hotel>



**Scott Dunn**  
ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST A HOLIDAY



**K**  
KRISTIANIA LECH



MAISONS&HOTELS  
*Sibuet*



**SILVERSEA**

## **FROM ICE SKATING TO WINTER WONDERLAND - ENJOY LONDON'S FESTIVITIES WITH THE CHRISTMAS CONCIERGE AT THE KENSINGTON HOTEL**

This Christmas get into the festive spirit with the 'Discover London Christmas Package' at The Kensington Hotel. Guests will enjoy special festive treats, including a mulled wine or hot chocolate upon arrival and Christmas treats at turn down. Ideal for kids and families, special gingerbread and cupcake decorating masterclasses with the hotels pastry chef are available for children of all ages. The Kensington Hotel 'Christmas Concierge' service is on hand to create the perfect family day out as the hotel is situated just a short stroll from Hyde Park, home of ice-skating and the Ice Kingdom at Winter Wonderland. Guests can also pick up last minute Christmas gifts at the Hyde Park Christmas Market, with over 200 fairy lit wooden chalets selling small handmade crafts, Christmas decorations and gourmet festive foods. Housed in a traditional Georgian townhouse, the hotel comprises 136 rooms and 14 suites, all individually designed and include hand-picked furniture complimenting the hotel's period architecture.

**HOW:** Discover London at Christmas package from £235 per room per night based on two people sharing. Includes full English breakfast, mulled wine or hot chocolate on arrival, festive treat at turndown, zone 1 & 2 travel card for 1 day during the stay, £10 food and drink credit, early check-in and late check-out and a dedicated Christmas Concierge. Package available 22nd November 2014 - 4th January 2015. Dressed Christmas tree £85, decorate-i-yourself Christmas tree from £95.  
[www.doylecollection.com/kensington](http://www.doylecollection.com/kensington)

## **EUROPE:**

### **CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN TRADITIONAL PROVENCAL FLAIR AT LA BASTIDE DE MARIE, MENERBES, FRANCE**

This December La Bastide de Marie will open for its first festive season, opening its doors to guests from 19th December to 4th January 2015 for an authentic Provencal Christmas. Guests of the hotel will be greeted with supper on Christmas Eve, with church bells signalling the festivities arrival. In-keeping with Provencal tradition, guests will be presented with thirteen Christmas desserts prepared by La Bastide de Marie's head chef and presented on a table covered in bon bons and rustic Provencal decorations. Nearby village Menerbes is home to the Little Truffle Market, selling none other than the infamous black truffle. The market takes place on the Sunday after Christmas in the village's main square and is one of the highlights of the winter season. Neighbouring city Avignon has one of Provence's best Christmas markets from 30th November until 5th January. Lavishly illuminated with thousands of



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Christmas lights, the Place de l'Horloge houses some 50 wooden chalets selling Provençal delicacies, santons, fabrics and more. Animated and illuminated nativity scenes with traditional "santon" nativity figures light up the nearby Chemin des Crèches, and parades, folk dancing and Christmas carols add to the festive atmosphere.

**HOW:** Rates from 350EUR per night, half board basis. [www.labastidedemarie.com](http://www.labastidedemarie.com)

### **LE BRISTOL AT THE HEART OF A PARISIAN CHRISTMAS**

December 2014 will see Hotel Le Bristol Paris embrace the spirit of Christmas following the completion of its 150 Million Euro renovation programme. Le Bristol's iconic façade will sparkle with thousands of cascading lights illuminating its walls, each window adorned with greenery, red flowers and even more lights. Le Jardin Français will host the main Christmas attraction, a 7-metre high Christmas tree decked out with over 8,400 fairy light bulbs, hundreds of precious baubles and tiny red and gold bows, each and every one of them individually handmade. There will also be another 3.5-metre in the lobby of the hotel adorned with delicate hand-blown glass ball ornaments, created by artisans in Germany. All trees at Le Bristol are Nordmann fir tree from Denmark selected by the famous Flowers Gallery florist, Pascal Mutel. Head Pastry Chef Laurent Jeannin has developed a decadent take on the classic Christmas Chocolate Yule Log. Moulded from real oak bark and assembled to look like a real wooden log, inside is traditional rolled biscuit made with Piemont hazelnuts is encased in hazelnut-flavoured butter cream. The dessert is garnished with light hazelnut cream, ginger-flavoured raspberry jam, whole caramelized hazelnuts and fresh raspberries, and finished with a gold dusted chocolate star and delicate chocolate branches. Le Bristol's Three Michelin starred Executive Chef Eric Frechon has created a spectacular Christmas menu, including a carpaccio of scallops served with oyster sorbet and topped with Iranian Ossetra caviar.

**HOW:** Rates start from €900 per night based on two people sharing, Room Only. [www.lebristolparis.com](http://www.lebristolparis.com)

### **HOTEL ARTS BARCELONA CELEBRATES A SPANISH CHRISTMAS**

Hotel Arts Barcelona has Christmas fully wrapped up with an outstanding line up of festive events. The festive season will kick-off early in the month with the unveiling of a spectacular 'paper and flowers' Christmas decorations display designed in partnership with florist Donna Stain and paper artist Sophie Cuvelier. Guests with creative flair can try their hand at floristry with the exclusive 'Jingle Blooms' class hosted on December 13th by Donna Stain, the hotel's resident Creative Floral Designer. For Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Enoteca, Hotel Arts Barcelona's Two

Michelin starred Restaurant headed up by Paco Perez will offer a gourmet six course Christmas menu. Dishes include the *finest foie gras with apple 'Christmas Croquettes'* and *Traditional Catalan soup with meatballs and Langoustines*. At Arola, Head Chef Sergi Arola has devised a 'Crazy Touch' Christmas menu offering *sea urchin au gratin*, *Ox Tail with Sea Cucumber* plus traditional dishes including *Escudella* (Catalan Stew) and Christmas Yule Log.

**HOW:** Rates at Hotel Arts Barcelona start from £245 per room per night bed and breakfast. The Jingle Blooms class on the 13th December starts from €120 per person. [www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Barcelona](http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Barcelona)

## USA:

### CRUISING FOR CHRISTMAS

Silversea's *Silver Whisper* will be sailing around Central America over Christmas and New Year, setting sail from Fort Lauderdale and ending its journey in Los Angeles. This 18-day cruise is packed with activities and excursions.

Take cooking lessons from dancing chefs in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico and learn how to make seven authentic salsas and three types of Margaritas before taking part in a Salsa lesson led by an expert. Guests can take a whale watching tour through the Sea of Cortez and Pacific Coast to spot Californian grey whales, finbacks, humpbacks and blue whales on their annual migration. There is also the option of zip lining through the canopy of Los Suenos tropical rainforest in Costa Rica, coffee tasting in Guatemala and eco walking in Colombia along with many more exciting activities before disembarking in the colourful and vibrant Los Angeles, California.

**HOW:** Silver Whisper Voyage 4434 departs from Fort Lauderdale, Florida on the 19th December 2014 for a 17-day cruise disembarking in Los Angeles, California calling at Key West, Santa Marta, Cartagena, the Panama Canal, Puntarenas, Puerto Quetzal, Puerto Chiapas and Cabo San Lucas. Prices start at £4,850 per person based on two sharing a Vista Suite. For more information visit [www.silversea.com](http://www.silversea.com) or call 0844 251 0837.

### HEAD TO BOSTON FOR SALES TAX FREE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AND STAY AT BOUTIQUE HOTEL XV BEACON

Get into the Christmas Spirit with a festive trip to Boston, Massachusetts where the largest Christmas tree in New England is ablaze with 350,000 flashing LED lights at Faneuil Hall Marketplace. For sales tax free Christmas shopping, head to Newbury street where all the big brands, designer and independent boutiques. During the winter months the legendary Boston Common, houses a large

outdoor ice skating rink. In the evening pick a Christmas show, choose from the Nutcracker, Black Nativity and Radio City Rockettes and for those who want to get in the spirit with the locals there is the 'Santa Speedo Run' on the 6th December. Stay at the boutique hotel XV Beacon located just steps away from all the action of the city. Situated in a 1903 Beaux Arts Building that unites cutting-edge technology with Jeffersonian style, XV Beacon in Boston is centrally located at 15 Beacon Street. The hotel has 63 guest rooms - each with a gas fireplace, perfect for cosy winter evenings - and is set in a historic neighbourhood with quaint brick sidewalks, authentic Federal and Greek Revival row houses and evocative gas-lit streets. In celebration of the festive season XV Beacon is offering a Winter Wishes package. Guests can enjoy 10% off when they stay for two nights and 15% off when they book three nights or more.

**HOW:** Rates start from \$295 with upgrade on arrival (based on availability). <http://www.xvbeacon.com/>

### **EUROPEAN SKI:**

#### **SCOTT DUNN LAUNCH THE ULTIMATE WEEKEND SKI BREAK IN VAL D'ISÈRE AND ST ANTON**

Perfect for those unable to take a full week off to hit the slopes around the busy Christmas period, Scott Dunn has launched 'ski weekends' packages at some of its finest chalets across the French resort of Val d'Isère and legendary St Anton in Austria. The new weekend packages, which are valid for stays between Thursday - Sunday, enable keen skiers to max out on the slopes over three nights while enjoying the luxuries of Scott Dunn's superb chalet offering, including Chef service. With flights in/out of London City Airport, the new packages make an ideal weekend escape for burnt out city workers looking to escape the big smoke for a long weekend or even those wishing to entertain clients in a 'wow' factor way. The ski weekends also provide a prime opportunity to check out Scott Dunn's renowned chalets as they are normally only available to rent in their entirety and for the minimum stay of a week.

**HOW:** Scott Dunn offers 3 nights in a shared chalet from £995 per person based on two sharing and including return flights from London City Airport to Zurich with British Airways / to Geneva with SWISS and shared airport transfers. Includes half-board chalet service and Chef. Valid for travel Thursday - Sunday on select weekends from 11 December 2014 - 19 March 2015. [www.scottdunn.com](http://www.scottdunn.com/) / 020 8682 5050

#### **SKIING IN A WINTER WONDERLAND - THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE AT THE KRISTIANIA, LECH**



Lech in Austria is a picture perfect, chocolate box ski resort, with oodles of natural Alpine charm and festive fun beyond the slopes for those wanting that perfect white Christmas experience. More akin to a luxurious home than a hotel, guests staying at The Kristania, Lech can take advantage of a whole host of Christmas themed frolics, from taking sleigh rides through the winter landscape to snowy picnics, toboggan runs, ice skating and deer watching. Every area of the hotel comes alive as a winter wonderland, with Christmas trees inside and out and decorations festooned wherever there's a spare space. From giant baubles to polar bears adorning the Christmas tree – it's the perfect kitsch take on Christmas, put together by the truly creative owner Gertrud Schneider, who herself grew up enjoying Christmas at the hotel, when run by her father, former Olympic downhill champion Othmar Schneider. Come Christmas Eve (when Christmas is celebrated in Austria), families can expect home baked Christmas biscuits, chocolates, Gingerbread Houses and even a visit from Santa, as well as impromptu carol singing and celebrations for all in the bar, which can lay claim to the largest selection of Schnapps in the Alps. Guaranteed to give you some Christmas cheer...

**How:** One-night at the Kristania, Lech costs from €350 per room. This includes bottle of Champagne in room, complimentary mini-bar, wifi and snow shuttle van as well as the services of a ski concierge. Valid for minimum four-night stays. [www.kristania.at](http://www.kristania.at)

### **SAVE 20% ON A POWDER WHITE CHRISTMAS AND NO ARGUING ON THE WASHING UP...**

Roaring log fires, Christmas trees inside and out and all the mulled wine you can muster make the Alps the perfect festive break. As an added incentive, leading ski specialist Powder White is offering is also offering great savings of over £2000 on ski chalet holidays over the Christmas week, making the dream of an Alpine escape far from the Queen's Speech in reach. With chalets in the top five European resorts of St Anton, Verbier, Courchevel, Val d'Isere and Meribel, guests are guaranteed Christmas cheer with each resort laying on their own annual festivities – from Santa taking to the slopes on his sleigh to carol singing. On Christmas Day, Powder White chalet guests will be treated to a full Christmas gala dinner with canapés, gourmet dinner with select dinner wine, flowing Champagne and unlimited house wine – and crucially no washing up afterwards.

**HOW:** Arriving 20th December, Powder White is offering savings of £2,158 for a seven-night stay at Chalet Renardeaux in Meribel, now available for just £8,630 per chalet or £719 per person based on 12 sharing. With six comfy bedrooms it's perfect for family or friends gatherings, a free-standing quintessentially Alpine escape with a lovely open log fire, a great terrace and even a

private Sauna in the heart of the Musillon area of the resort. Price includes daily hot cooked breakfast, afternoon tea, three-course dinners with select dinner wines, unlimited house wines, Champagne and Canapes on arrival and a Christmas Gala dinner. Flights and transfers are not included but can be arranged on request. For reservations visit [www.powderwhite.com](http://www.powderwhite.com) or call +44 (0) 288778888.

### **ESCAPE CHRISTMAS - THE BEST PLACES TO SAY BAH! HUMBUG! FURTHER AFIELD: THE WARMEST CHRISTMAS YET...**

#### **FROM LAOS TO CAMBODIA'S ANGKOR TEMPLES & SONG SAA PRIVATE ISLAND RESORT WITH AMPERSAND TRAVEL**

This laid back luxury tour combines Laos and Cambodia's most alluring highlights in perfect time to catch the winter sun in time for Christmas. The best place to stay over Christmas is in the enchanting former royal capital of Luang Prabang, an exploration of the Temples of Angkor and down-time on the strikingly beautiful archipelago off the Cambodian coast. Start the journey in the spiritual town in Luang Prabang, it cannot fail but charm even the most world weary traveller, with its charming streets lined with colonial houses, restaurants and delightful boutiques. Next fly to Cambodia to explore the lost city of Angkor: approximately 900 temples made up the most astounding archaeological site in Asia. To unwind in style, instead of flocking to Thailand for a beach break, escape to what Ampersand thinks is Asia's most romantic and up and coming spot. Song Saa Private Island Resort is a sustainable sanctuary of uncompromising luxury and unique design which draws its inspiration from the Cambodian fishing village of Koh Rong Archipelago. The resort is all inclusive and its contemporary Khmer fusion cuisine is a major draw. Accommodation consists of 27 stunning jungle, sea-view and overwater villas.

**HOW:** Ampersand offer 11 days from £5420 per person, on a B&B basis including transfers and flights from the UK. [www.ampersandtravel.com](http://www.ampersandtravel.com) / 020 7819 9770

#### **SAIL THE SEAS IN THE CORAL TRIANGLE WITH TIGER BLUE**

Swap reindeers for coral reefs and manta rays on board a traditional wooden yacht, Tiger Blue, which sails around the islands of Eastern Indonesia. Ideal for groups of friends and families, the boat is available for private charter in the remote region of Raja Ampat until 26th December. The skilled chef can prepare freshly caught sashimi and gado-gado while guests explore the mangroves on kayaks, climb up limestone outcrops hanging with orchids to take in magnificent views of the bays or relax on a deserted white

sandy beach.

**HOW:** Charters from \$5800 per night, including all meals, soft drinks, beers, four dives per day, fishing, waterskiing and parasailing.

### **SWAP SLEIGH BELLS FOR THE SOUNDS OF NATURE ON A WILDERNESS ESCAPE IN NEW ZEALAND**

Whilst the Kiwis love Christmas as much as anyone (albeit with a beach and BBQ); the land of the long white cloud also has plenty of opportunities to escape the sound of jingle bells. Head out to the wilderness on one of New Zealand's Nine Great Walks - multi-day walks through some of the country's most awe inspiring landscapes - and wake up on Christmas day with just the sounds of nature as your festive backdrop. Less well known than its famous Fiordland neighbour the Milford Track, the Kepler Track is an awe-inspiring walk showcasing all the best features of the South Island region including mountains, native forest, rare bird life, waterfalls and glacier-carved valleys. Starting in Manapouri or Te Anau, the 60km four-day walk has a range of three huts and two campsites for overnight stays en route, each hut complete with the basic necessities of running water, solar lighting and cooking facilities and set in beautiful remote locations - with no chance of a stray Santa parking his sleigh nearby.

**HOW:** Great Walks and hut accommodation can be booked independently through the Department of Conservation with a Great Walks Pass ([www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz)). For more information on New Zealand's Nine Great Walks visit [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com)

### **NO SHARING REQUIRED - A GIFT FOR YOU COURTESY OF ALILA VILLAS SOORI**

Christmas is a time of giving and a chance to be around the ones you love, but let's face it, sometimes it's essential for a little bit of selfish pampering. Alila Villas Soori is a private hideaway on the south west coast of Bali, offering guests a chance to retreat away from all the festive madness, restore the body and soul and start the New Year fully refreshed and focused with its new Relaxology package. Designed to replace gluttony and hours of bad TV, the package includes a wealth of blissful spa treatments, healthy meals (including the choice of a new raw food menu), cultural journeys around tranquil west coast Bali, as well as signature soothing and detoxifying massages, all created using locally sourced ingredients and even the healing powers of the volcanic sand. The break concludes with a healthy dinner by the sparkling volcanic sand beach, with the magnificent mount Batukaru in the distance with panoramic views across the azure Indian Ocean - the perfect antidote to festive madness.

**HOW:** The Relaxology package at Alila Villas Soori costs from USD \$2,630++ per room for five nights staying in a Mountain Pool Villa and includes arrival in a helicopter,



daily breakfast in the Cotta restaurant, a daily Spa Alila experience, a one time Alila Journey - "Exploring Kerambitan", a designer picnic lunch, a healthy dinner by the beach and round trip airport transfers. [www.alilahotels.com/soori](http://www.alilahotels.com/soori)

**WELCOME PAPA NOEL IN SCORCHING TEMPERATURES OF 39 DEGREES AT URUGUAY'S NEWEST ULTRA - LUXURY RETREAT: BAHÍA VIK JOSÉ IGNACIO**

Spend the lead up to Christmas at the latest addition to Vik's Retreats premier collection of properties that are redefining the travel experience in South America. Bahía Vik will span ten acres of beach dunes on the José Ignacio peninsula, facing west with sweeping views across the Southern Atlantic Ocean. Wake up on Christmas morning to the beachfront landscape and surrounding dunes, which reflect contemporary beach living with a seamless flow between indoor and outdoor inspired by art and Vik luxury. The eleven uniquely designed bungalows will feature distinct exteriors, art-filled interiors and a unique design scheme. Two of these beachfront bungalows will house three bedrooms, while the remaining seven bungalows will contain two bedrooms, and two larger bungalows will contain either three or four separate suites. Natural dunes covered in swaying beach grasses and other local flora will divide the bungalows from one another, providing privacy for guests. In keeping with Vik Retreats collection, artist involvement will be an important focus at Bahía Vik, many new talents will debut as well, giving the latest Vik Retreat its own distinctive aesthetic.

**HOW:** Scott Dunn offers 7 nights at Bahia Vik from £3,465 per person. This is based on two people sharing a Suite on a B&B basis and includes international and domestic flights and private return airport transfers. Guests who stay at Bahia Vik can use the facilities of Estancia Vik and go horse riding . [www.scottdunn.com](http://www.scottdunn.com) / 020 8682 5030