



PRESS RELEASE



LEARNING: THE NEW LOUNGING

'Up-Skilling' Holidays offer guests the ultimate bragging rights and endless Instagram opportunities



Scott Dunn
ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST A HOLIDAY

Reclining on a sun-lounger, cocktail in hand is no longer enough for many travellers. Intrepid tourists increasingly want to up-skill and take home new, unusual experiences that will impress and entertain their friends for endless dinner parties to come. Fortunately, numerous strange and wonderful experiences are on offer all over the world; from creating your own bottle of wine in Portugal to mastering the notorious 'Nihiwatu wave' off a remote Indonesian island.

GO TO ELF SCHOOL IN THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

Undoubtedly one of the most admired professions in the world, becoming an elf requires huge talent and ability. Since 1998, Santa Park in northern Finland has been teaching children and adults the skills and values required to become a top class elf. The elves and elfology experts will share ancient elf secrets and put pupils through their paces to see if they have what it takes to become a member of Santa's closest team. Successful pupils graduate from Elf School and receive an official Elf School Certificate to mark their achievement.

HOW: Prospective pupils can enroll at Elf School for free when visiting Santa Park. Entrance to Santa Park cost €31 for adults and €25.50 for children between three and 12 years during the winter season. Children below three years go free. Finnair flies from London Heathrow to Rovaniemi via Helsinki daily with fares starting from £214 in Economy Class. (See Visit Finland at www.visitfinland.com or www.finnair.com for more information.)

BECOME A MASTER CHOCOLATIER ON THE FRENCH RIVIERA

Famous for its own brand of chocolates, Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc is now a definitive destination for chocoholics thanks to its new



chocolate workshop. The hotel's Head Pastry Chef Lilian Bonnefoi is an undisputed chocolate master, creating bona fide works of art in his chosen material. Lilian and his team produce a wide selection of chocolates, from Champagne truffles to chocolate sauces for steaks and gold leaf chocolate decoration for desserts. All guests at Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc are encouraged to visit the chocolaterie and can join sessions led by Lilian to master the art of chocolate making. Children are also invited to take part in specialist workshops organised throughout the summer.

HOW: Rooms at Hotel Du Cap-Eden-Roc start from £680 per room per night including breakfast.

(www.hotel-du-cap-eden-roc.com)

LEARN TO FIGHT WITH A THAI BOXING WORLD CHAMPION

Ideal for fitness fanatics looking to push their body to another level, Palais Namaskar offers the chance to learn boxing from a master with 5-Day Performance Programmes. World Champion Thai Boxer and acclaimed fitness consultant, Abdoulaye Fadiga, will push you through a grueling regime from sunrise to sunset. Abdoulaye Fadiga's 5 Day Performance Programme will challenge fitness devotees with a back to back schedule of Thai boxing, intense circuit training, extreme core workouts, running, rock climbing, zip lining, hiking in the Atlas Mountains and extreme mountain biking. The end result will ensure guests leave fitter and stronger than ever before.

HOW: The 5 Day Performance Programme starts from €3,880 for all fitness activities overseen by Abdoulaye Fadiga and the Champion Spirit Club team, five nights accommodation in a deluxe room on a full board basis and personalized diet programme, yoga and massages at Spa Le Namaskar. 19th - 23rd March 2015 and 30th April - 5th May 2015.

(www.palaisnamaskar.com)

LEARN ABOUT THE REAL STORY OF MOBY DICK IN THE HEARTLAND OF AMERICA'S OLD WHALING REGION

Based on the novel by Nathaniel Philbrick, *In The Heart of The Sea* retells the harrowing experiences of Captain George Pollard and his first mate Owen Chase on The Essex, a Nantucket whaling ship struck by a whale off the coast of South America causing irreparable damage. The crew remained stranded at sea for 90 days with only a handful of survivors. Today the island of Nantucket has one of the largest historic districts in America, with more than 800 buildings still standing from the 18th and 19th centuries. To celebrate the upcoming release of 'In the Heart of the Sea', directed by Ron Howard and set for release in December 2015, Nantucket Island Resorts are offering a new package to learn about the history of The Essex. The experience includes two nights' accommodation and two tickets to the Nantucket Whaling Museum.

HOW: The In The Heart of The Sea experience is available with all Nantucket Island Resort hotels and properties, package includes a two nights stay and two tickets to the Nantucket

please contact Perowne Charles
Communications

+44 (0) 20 7792 8884
team@verypcc.com

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Whaling Museum. The new Essex ship exhibition opens 24th
April 2015.

The Wauwinet from \$370
White Elephant Hotel from \$390
White Elephant Village |One-bedroom Residences from \$450
Jared Coffin House from \$276
The Cottages & Lofts |Two-bedroom from \$450

(www.nantucketislandresorts.com)

BECOME A WINE EXPERT AT A GRAND FRENCH CHÂTEAU

Boasting a cellar of 7,500 bottles and brimming with history, Château Saint-Martin & Spa is a corking spot for wine lovers to indulge and learn about their passion. Each month, a wine-tasting evening takes place, followed by food and wine pairing dinner with Château Saint-Martin & Spa Executive Chef Jean-Luc Lefrançois. Run by head sommelier Géraud Tournier, the exclusive evenings offer members the opportunity to discuss and taste wine in a friendly and unique atmosphere. For non-members, a bespoke private wine tasting can be arranged with Géraud Tournier, followed by a private dinner with wine pairing in the hotel's fine dining Michelin-starred restaurant Le Saint-Martin.

HOW: Rates start from €350 per night on a b&b basis. (www.chateau-st-martin.com)

CHANNEL YOUR INNER FISHMONGER WITH BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR OF BARCELONA FISH MARKET

On a series of dates throughout 2015 Hotel Arts Barcelona will offer guests the opportunity to discover their inner fishmonger at Barcelona's iconic fish market. Located in the city's main port, wholesalers gather to bid for the fresh catch of the day.

Usually the fish market is out of bounds to the general public, but Hotel Arts Barcelona will offer guests the opportunity to enjoy a guided tour of the auction accompanied by Executive Chef Antonio Saez. Guests will learn about different varieties of fish and seafood and can choose their preferred fish to be cooked by Antonio Saez as part of a delicious, unique tasting menu that evening back at the hotel. Guests will continue to learn with a Cocktail master class and aperitivo at Arola Bar by mixologist Diego Baud.

HOW: The Barcelona fish auction experience costs €150 per person and includes a welcome group drink, private return transport to Barcelona Port, visit to the fish auction, a cocktail master class at Hotel Arts Barcelona and auction fish dinner by Executive Chef Antonio Saez paired with wines. Room rates start from £245 per room per night, on a b&b basis (www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Barcelona)

LEARN THE TRUE MEANING OF CONSERVATION IN A TROPICAL TURTLE PARADISE

Frégate Island Private is a conservation lovers' dream, whose secrets are revealed by resident conservationist Tanya

Leibrick. Guests are welcomed by charismatic Giant Aldabra Tortoises, two thousand of which roam freely across the island. The sandy beaches of Fregate Island provide a vital nesting habitat for two species of sea turtle: the critically endangered Hawksbill Turtle and the endangered Green Turtle. Fregate Island is the only remaining habitat of the "Seychelles Magpie Robin". Almost extinct with a headcount of only 14, it was the second rarest bird in the world 30 years ago. These birds have since been restored to a healthy population by the permanent on-island conservation staff.

HOW: Private Pool Residence from €4,400 per residence per night, including all meals anywhere on the island, soft beverages, house wines, local beers as well as personal laundry, island buggy, non-motorised watersports and guided nature walks.

(www.fregate.com)

CREATE YOUR OWN BOTTLE OF WINE IN PORTUGUESE VINEYARD COUNTRY

Become immersed in Portugal's finest export at Six Senses Douro Valley's interactive Wine Academy. Dedicated to providing unique and regional wine experiences, the Wine Academy showcases leading vintages from the region. With 100 grape varieties in Douro, guests can create their own blend of wine by visiting the resort over four weekends in different seasons, learning how it's produced. Top wine website, WineSpectator.com, ranks three bottles from Douro Valley in its top five, meaning there really is nowhere better for guests to learn the craft themselves.

HOW: Rates from €285 per night including taxes, service charge and breakfast for two people. Six Senses Douro Valley opens on 1st June

2015. (www.sixsenses.com/resorts/douro-valley/destination)

LEARN TO JUMP, TWIST AND FLIP YOUR WAY DOWN THE SLOPES LIKE A WINTER OLYMPIAN

Improve your ski holiday bragging rights with a Powder White Slopestyle course, designed to give skiers the chance to learn the tricks and jumps needed to master the course. Expert tuition comes from New Generation Ski School Freeski camp instructors who offer three, three-hour sessions spread across the week. Participants will learn to master the art of riding switch (backwards), warming up with flatland tricks, before progressing to flat 180's and 360's. Next step is an introduction session to the park, learning to take off and land on big air jumps (with an air bag to catch the inevitable fall) and practicing core balance on boxes and rails before the grand finale hitting the half pipe.

HOW: Powder White Slopestyle costs from £618 per person, based on a seven-night fully catered stay at the new Chalet Patrice in Meribel and a three-hour Slopestyle session each on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The package is also available in Val d'Isere, Tignes and Courchevel. Guests require twin tip skis, helmets and appropriate insurance to participate.

(www.powderwhite.com)

LEARN TO PADDLEBOARD ALONG NEW ZEALAND'S PICTURESQUE COASTLINE

One of the fastest growing sports around the world, stand-up paddleboarding is a great way to exercise whilst taking in the waterways and coastlines of New Zealand. Boarders participate in a training session with an expert to master the techniques of balance, coordination, core strength and endurance. The areas around Auckland, including the Matakana coast and Waiheke Island as well as Gisborne, Abel Tasman and Milford Sound are just a few of the top places in New Zealand to master stand-up paddleboarding. For those up for a challenge, Waiheke Board Riders offers the Fitness Explorer Package, which includes a weekly one-hour paddleboard lesson to learn the proper paddle techniques, while exploring different parts of Waiheke's coastline each week.

HOW: Waiheke Board Riders offers a six-week Fitness Explorer Package from NZD \$95 including rental of the paddle and board. (www.waihekeboardriders.co.nz or www.newzealand.com)

LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN SPA PRODUCTS IN A BALINESE PARADISE

Take one envious look at the clear complexions of Balinese women and you'll want to know their secrets. At the Alila Manggis organic garden, and as part of the cooking school experience, guests will be taught how to make 'food for your skin'. Starting with picking the herbs, roots and fruits in the garden and jungle, guests will learn how to make everything from Balinese Jamu health drinks to face packs, coconut oil and organic soap – all from natural, organic ingredients. Guests will leave the class rich with the knowledge of Bali's traditional medicinal recipes, well prepared to keep skin healthy and youthful with the natural creations.

HOW: Alila Manggis offers the 'Food for your Skin' Journey from USD \$100 per person for half a day from 8:00am-1:30pm. (www.alilahotels.com/manggis)

GIDDY-UP! INDULGE YOUR INNER JOHN WAYNE WITH BY LEARNING TO RIDE COWBOY STYLE AT AN 80,000 ACRE RANCH

Learn to ride like a ranch cowboy in 80,000 acres of natural grasslands and forests in the heartland of the rugged British Columbia wilderness at the Siwash Lake Ranch. The Ranch offers a special 'Synergy with Horses' programme that has been carefully crafted to allow guests to connect with one horse for the duration of their stay. Working on intuitive skills and riding techniques, the programme is tailored to suit each guest's ability, against the backdrop of the vast, rugged terrain. Rootin' tootin' children's programmes are also available during the summer months. A selection of rooms and luxury tents with en-suite bathrooms are available in a variety of combinations to suit all needs. These include five premier rooms inside the main

lodge; two of which connect and are ideal for families. The Cariboo and Siwash suites are luxurious, each with two bedrooms, a lounge and views of the panoramic mountain landscape.

HOW: Scott Dunn offers seven nights at Siwash Ranch Lake from £6,995 per adult and £4,195 per child full board based on two adults and two children staying in a Tent Suite, valid for travel in July or August. Price includes flights, return private transfers and all riding. (www.scottdunn.com or +44 (0)20 8682 5030)

EMULATE KELLY SLATER AND LEARN TO SURF OFF A HIDDEN INDONESIAN ISLAND

Located on the lesser known and remote Indonesian private island of Sumba, Nihiwatu is a hidden surfer's paradise and home to world-renowned 'Occy's left wave' or 'Nihiwatu wave' as it's also known. Free-dive and surfing expert Chad Bagwell will help guests conquer Nihiwatu's wave, with aspiring surfers learning all the skills required to connect with and ride the waves like a pro. Chad and his team run programmes for all levels, from novices getting to grips with the basics, to experts looking to further enhance their wave-riding skills.

Additional watersport activities available to guests include paddle-boarding, free-diving, snorkelling, spearfishing and kayaking in the turquoise blue Indian Ocean waters surrounding. Variations of world-class fishing and diving can be enjoyed on the open ocean or directly from Nihiwatu's golden shore.

HOW: Rates at Nihiwatu start from \$900 per person per night based on two sharing, on an all-inclusive basis and including wifi. Sumba is a one-hour flight from Bali, with daily flights to the island from Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport in Denpasar. (www.nihiwatu.com)

LEARN TO SCUBA DIVE IN THE VIBRANT, RICH WATERS OF INDONESIA

With the sort of marine life you usually only see on *Blue Planet* and scenic beauty to spare, the Raja Ampat archipelago is a mecca for divers. This 15,000sq mile area is considered the most bio-diverse region on the planet – with an astonishing 75 per cent of all known coral species. Found at the northwest tip of Bird's Head Peninsula on the island of New Guinea, Raja Ampat is an archipelago of over 1,500 small islands, cays and shoals surrounding the four main islands of Misool, Salawati, Batanta and Waigeo. *The place to stay is the private Misool Eco Resort; an exclusive dive resort and conservation centre housed on its own private island and boasting eight secluded wooden water cottages. The resort is equipped with the finest diving equipment and offers carefully tailored programmes to suit beginners through to expert diver. Novice divers will be taught basic skills from qualified instructors who will guide guests on their introductory dives. More experienced divers can make use of professional equipment and explore deeper waters to explore and get up close and personal with spectacular marine life.*

HOW: Ampersand Travel offers 7 nights at Misool Eco Resort from £3,987 per person based on two sharing a water cottage. Price includes return speedboat transfers, unlimited diving for 7 days and return economy flights. (www.ampersandtravel.com / +44 (0)20 7819 9770)

LEARN TO ROLL YOUR OWN CIGAR WITH THE COMPANY BORN FROM THE EMBERS OF CASTRO'S PERSONAL CIGAR ROLLER

Silversea guests are invited to stop off on their cruise to learn the art of cigar making from the most accomplished torcedores in the Bahamas. The Graycliff Cigar Rolling Company began as just one man in a restaurant entrance and has grown to receive international recognition. The Company draws inspiration from Avelino Lara, famous for his creations in Havana and formerly a personal roller for Fidel Castro. Like true torcedores, guests will learn how to sort, clean, store and roll any of Graycliff's seven award-winning blends before a lesson in how to light and savour their creations.

HOW: This excursion from the Silver Shore Collection is available on selected Silversea cruises calling at Nassau. Silver Whisper Voyage 4533 will depart from Fort Lauderdale on 22 December 2015 on a 14-day round-trip. Fares start from £4,350 per guest based on two sharing a Vista Suite. (www.silversea.com / 0844 251 0837)

ARRIBA! ARRIBA! LEARN TO MAKE FROZEN MARGARITAS AND SALSA LIKE BANDERAS

Enjoy a hands-on cooking and salsa experience in Mexico's party capital, Cabo San Lucas. 'Dancing Chefs' will introduce guests to the freshest Mexican ingredients before teaching the recipes for seven authentic Salsas, including Oaxacan Guacamole, Tangy Green Salsa and Rompope Dessert Salsa.

Guests will also enhance their cocktail repertoire by learning to make three types of Margarita's including the ever-popular frozen strawberry Margarita. The culinary creations can then be devoured, along with cheese quesadillas, taquitos and fried corn chips. After mastering traditional Mexican cooking guests are encouraged to take to the floor for an iconic Salsa dancing masterclass.

HOW – Silver Shadow 3508 will be embarking on it's 18 day cruise from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA to San Francisco, California, USA on 16th April 2015. Prices start from £4,450 per person based on two sharing a Vista Suite. (www.silversea.com / 0844 251 0837)