

# Abercrombie & Kent

EUROPE

PRODUCT

HOTELS

NEWS & EVENTS

ENJOY THE VIEW

SEPTEMBER 2017

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Abercrombie & Kent Europe Digital Magazine! We find ourselves halfway through the year and looking to make the most of the final weeks of the European summer before the cooler temperatures emerge and we are checking our Christmas lists already! In this edition you'll find some of the best new ideas, activities and destinations to explore, along with some fantastic offers to take advantage of. From the Proms In The Park in September to Venice's Barcolana Regatta in October, there are events to get involved in across the continent. Italy continues to find new and unique ways of showcasing its rich gastronomic heritage and will be opening its very own mega-complex of food and agriculture later this autumn. Meanwhile our team in Moscow leads the way in opening doors to exciting opportunities on the fringes of Asia - check out what's on offer in Baku on page 17. All over Europe the options continue to evolve and flourish and our teams are as excited as ever to carry on delivering incredible experiences for your clients.

*With very best wishes*



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# CONTENTS

## Good to Know

- > Calendar.....4
- > Meet the Team.....5

## Inspiring Experiences

- > Delights of UK & Ireland.....6
- > Italian & Croatian Insights.....7
- > Riches of Russia.....8
- > European Encounters.....9

## Hotel Special Offers

- > UK & Austria.....10
- > Italy, Czech Republic & Spain.....11

## Hotel News

- > France, Croatia & UK.....12

## Family Fun

- > Welsh Adventure.....13

## Your Friend Abroad

- > Alberto Frka in Dubrovnik.....14

## Staff Blog

- > Silvia Baldi in Lake Como.....15

## Interview

- > Monika Kohlbacher in Austria.....16

## Special Feature

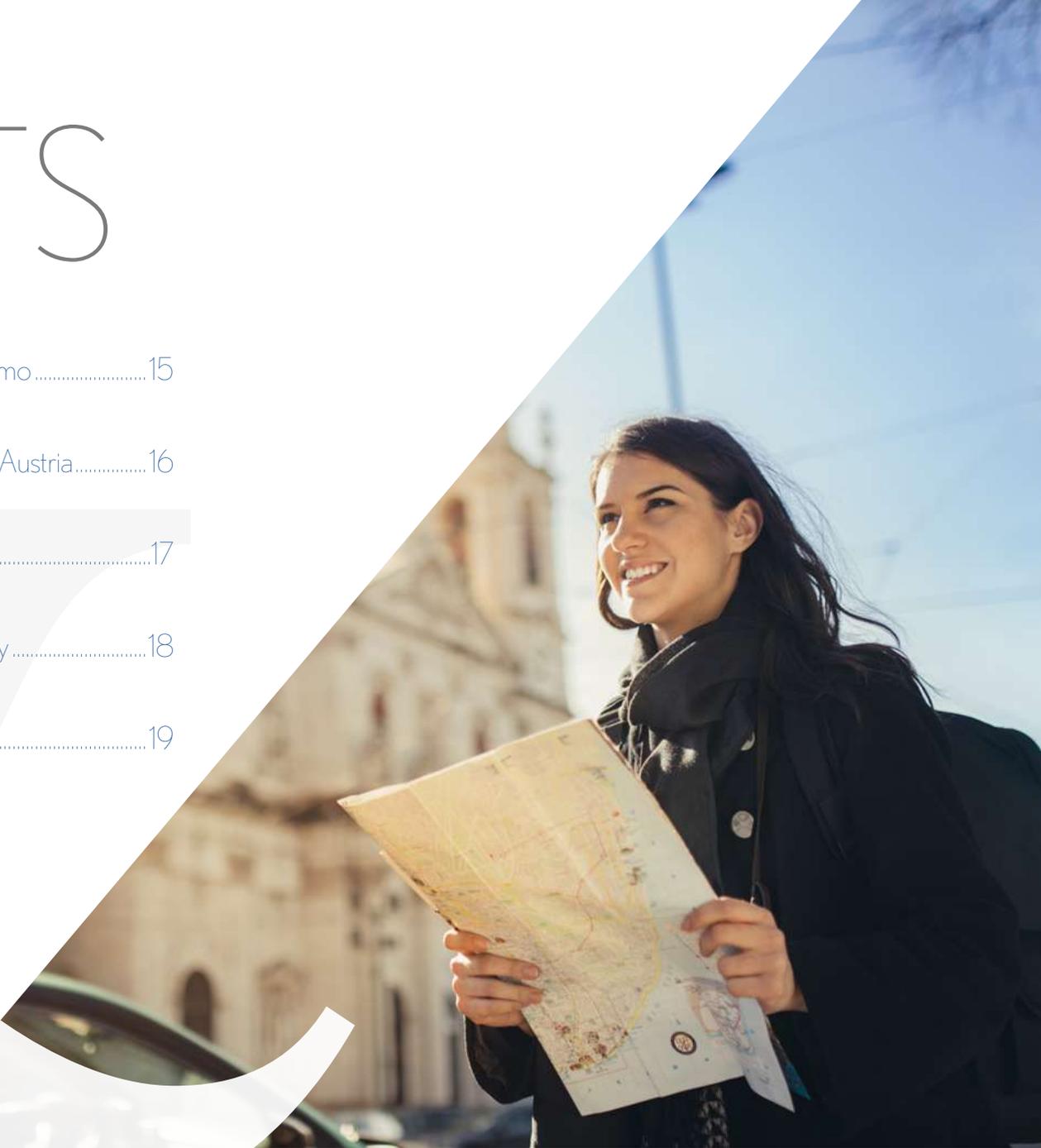
- > Baku, Azerbaijan.....17

## Tailor-made Groups

- > World War I Centenary.....18

## Further Information

- > Contacts.....19



**MOSCOW CITY DAYS RUSSIA**

Russians celebrate the birth of their capital. Moscow will mark its anniversary by many events worth seeing, including



open air concerts, sports contests and laser displays, and there will be plenty of food and drink stalls lining the streets.

**PROMS IN THE PARK LONDON, UK**

Proms in the Park is a haven of classical music, celebrations and fireworks. Pack a picnic and a bottle or two of fizz, and head to Hyde Park in London for an evening of grand live performances from Juan Diego Flórez, the first of many very special guests to be announced.



**GALWAY OYSTER FESTIVAL GALWAY, IRELAND**

The Galway Oyster Festival is dedicated to Ostrea edulis, the European flat oyster. The local molluscs are left



to grow for three years in the clean waters of Brandon Bay and Clarenbridge. Tens of thousands of the slippery critters are consumed on the Guinness Oyster Trail, on which 30 pubs give out free trays of the seafood with pints of the dark stuff.

**LONDON LITERATURE FESTIVAL LONDON, UK**

The London Literature Festival attracts leading writers from all over the world each year, for a series of talks, readings, workshops and spoken word performances. Stimulate your mind at this annual exploration of contemporary thought and vision.



**BARCOLANA REGATTA TRIESTE, ITALY**

The Barcolana is a historical international sailing regatta taking place in the Gulf of Trieste on the second Sunday of October each year. The race takes place on a 15-mile four-sided, fixed mark course. The starting line is between the Miramare Castle and the Sailing Club of Barcola and Grignano. Over the years the route has undergone several changes and one buoy has drifted across the border into Slovenian waters for a number of years.



**ABERGAVENTNY FOOD FESTIVAL WALES, UK**

The Abergavenny Food Festival runs over a weekend and is a celebration of all things delicious, with the scope going well beyond the borders of Wales. Check in for talks, masterclasses, book signings and of course, a market full of tasty stuff to buy. Best of all, there's craft beer!



**WHISKEY LIFE, PRAGUE CZECH REPUBLIC**

Choose from more than 150 different whiskeys, including rarities and those not yet available in the Czech Republic. Whether you are an ardent whiskey lover, or waiting to be converted, everyone will be satisfied. Experience whiskey at its finest and enjoy masterclasses of where leading whiskey experts will show you the way.



**ALBA WHITE TRUFFLE FAIR PIEDMONT, ITALY**

The Alba White Truffle World Market is the largest international exhibition of truffles coming from the Piedmontese hills of Langhe, Roero and Monferrato. Every day, thousands of batches of truffles, freshly picked, are displayed and sold by the 'trifolai' themselves.



**CORK FILM FESTIVAL CORK, IRELAND**

The Cork Film Festival is Ireland's oldest film festival, loyally supported by Corkonians, and attracting visitors from across the country and abroad, reflecting an unstinting curiosity, appetite and appreciation for the arts.



**PICASSO EXHIBITION PARIS, FRANCE**

It is always good to have an excuse to visit Paris, and one of the best is the chance to see "Picasso and the Masters", an exhibition at the Grand Palais that shows his work with some of the great paintings that influenced his career.



**NUREMBERG CHRISTMAS MARKET NUREMBERG, GERMANY**

The main market, held in the city's largest square (Hauptmarkt), positively hums with visitors enjoying the colours, sounds and quality of the handcrafted goods on sale, while beating off the cold with glasses (or small boots) full of Glühwein or enjoying spicy grilled sausages and Nuremberg gingerbread.



**HOGWARTS IN THE SNOW LONDON, UK**

Winter has arrived at Hogwarts. Glittering Christmas trees line the Great Hall and a replica festive feast including flaming Christmas puddings is laid out on the long tables. Special-effect fires roar in the fireplaces, the Gryffindor common room is filled with Christmas treats and the detailed Hogwarts castle model is covered in a special blanket of snow.



**LUCA PODDI**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
ITALY & CROATIA



**NATALIA ODINOKHINA**  
GENERAL MANAGER  
RUSSIA



**JON BENNETT**  
DIRECTOR OF SALES AND  
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
EUROPE



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TWO LANGUAGES  
OR MORE**

**ANNA POTAPOVA**  
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**CAROLIN MCLEOD**  
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**FLOREAN SMOUT**  
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**DEDICATED  
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**ADAM GABBETIS**  
MICE SPECIALIST &  
PROJECT MANAGER  
EUROPE



**12 DIFFERENT  
NATIONALITIES**

**JOSCELYN STOCKWELL**  
PLATINUM TRAVEL ADVISOR  
EUROPE



# DELIGHTS OF UK & IRELAND

## ENGLAND

### CHEERS: BOMBAY SAPPHIRE

Who would believe that once you head out of 21st-century London you can travel back in time? Well sometimes you can. Take a short trip by car to the Bombay Sapphire Gin Distillery in Northern Hampshire. On the banks of the River Test the distillery team has painstakingly restored Laverstoke Mill, ensuring its 300-year-old history as a paper mill will live on. If the gin itself is more your thing, you can explore the home of one of Britain's more popular drinks and even get creative yourself by taking part in the entertaining cocktail masterclass.



## NORTHERN IRELAND

### FROM THE SEA: OYSTER & MUSSEL BED

As with most island countries, the deep seas off the coast of Northern Island offer an abundant natural food garden. You'll want to make your way towards the shores to try the freshest delights at their source. For the real authentic experience, team up with an oyster farmer and head down on the tractor to the oyster beds to find out how oysters and mussels are farmed. Feed both your mind and your stomach as you enjoy the treats straight from the water, together with a pint of Guinness or a glass of Prosecco.



## ENGLAND

### DISCOVER: THE SECRETS OF THE TOWER

Regular visitors to England's capital will be more than familiar with the famous Tower of London, firmly embedded in the country's history for almost a millennium. While its past as a royal residence and prison are relatively well known, a number of hidden areas are now being revealed for the very first time. Though the route itself is being kept a guarded secret, visitors will have the chance to go out of bounds and witness the half-timbered Queens House, one of the few wooden buildings to survive the Great Fire of 1666. Don't miss the chance to check out some cells of the more famous prisoners - from one-time queen, Lady Jane Grey, to Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess.



## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

### WICKLOW HILLS HIKING & CYCLING

There's no need to stray too far from Dublin to find some great opportunities for adventure. Just an hour away are the dramatic Wicklow Mountains where an abundance of activities are on offer. Trek along the forested Wicklow Way to witness Powerscourt Waterfall, the largest in Ireland, and trail past romantic little cottages and timeworn dry stone walls. Or saddle up for a two-wheeled voyage and challenge yourself to the purpose-built Ballinastoe cycling route, a 9km singletrack that dives in and out of a variety of terrains.



## ITALY

### TWILIGHT: ROME BY VESPA

Explore the ancient city of Rome by night to evoke memories of the classic Dolce Vita lifestyle. Go for a spin on the back of a Vespa and feel like one of the locals as you buzz around the age-old cobblestone streets and alleyways. Some of Rome's most special places are off-limits to cars, so your Vespa guide can unlock the doors to some real treasures and save you the walk at the same time. The Eternal City takes on a whole new look as the sun goes down and you get a unique perspective as you zip past the Colosseum and check out the Baths of Caracalla and St Peter's Square, lighting up the night sky.

## ITALY

### INDULGE: EATALY, BOLOGNA

Considering the successful export of its cuisine to all corners of the globe, it is hardly a surprise to learn that the world's largest agri-food park is about to be launched in Italy. Based in Bologna, a city known as La Grassa (the Fat One) for its culinary renown, FICO Eataly World is set to open to the public this autumn. The 8-hectare park features a variety of farms, tasting points, market spaces, and educational activities aimed at bringing the country's extensive knowledge of food production to a wider audience. Having taken advantage of the freshest samples on offer, why not take a trip through the lifespan of pasta? Each step of the process, from the life-size wheat fields to the artisanal mills, can be witnessed in its authentic working form.



## ITALY

### GET CREATING: CREMONA VIOLIN WORKSHOP, CREMONA

Classical music lovers will recognise the name of Cremona in Northern Italy as the spiritual home of the violin, and the town today continues to earn its reputation as the centre of master violin makers. Its most famous son, Antonio Stradivari, is widely considered the most skilled luthier in history and lends his name not only to the famous Stradivarius violin, but also to the local consortium of violin makers. Here you are introduced to an expert who explains the painstaking but creative process of handcrafting the stringed instrument and its bow step by step - a real treat and a unique insight if you're musically inclined.

## CROATIA

### RELAX: SPLIT TO HVAR YACHT EXCURSION

The Adriatic coastline is teeming with dozens of islands waiting to be explored by private yacht. A beautiful city in its own right, Split also makes for a great starting point to sail out on a voyage of discovery. Make sure you check out the famous Blue Cave of Biševo - aim straight for the VIP entrance to witness how the sunlight bathes the cave in a glorious, glowing aquamarine. Over on the island of Vis, it's worth stopping for a snack in Komiza, a charming bohemian fishing village that transports you back in time, before taking in the sunset over the picturesque Pakleni Islands.

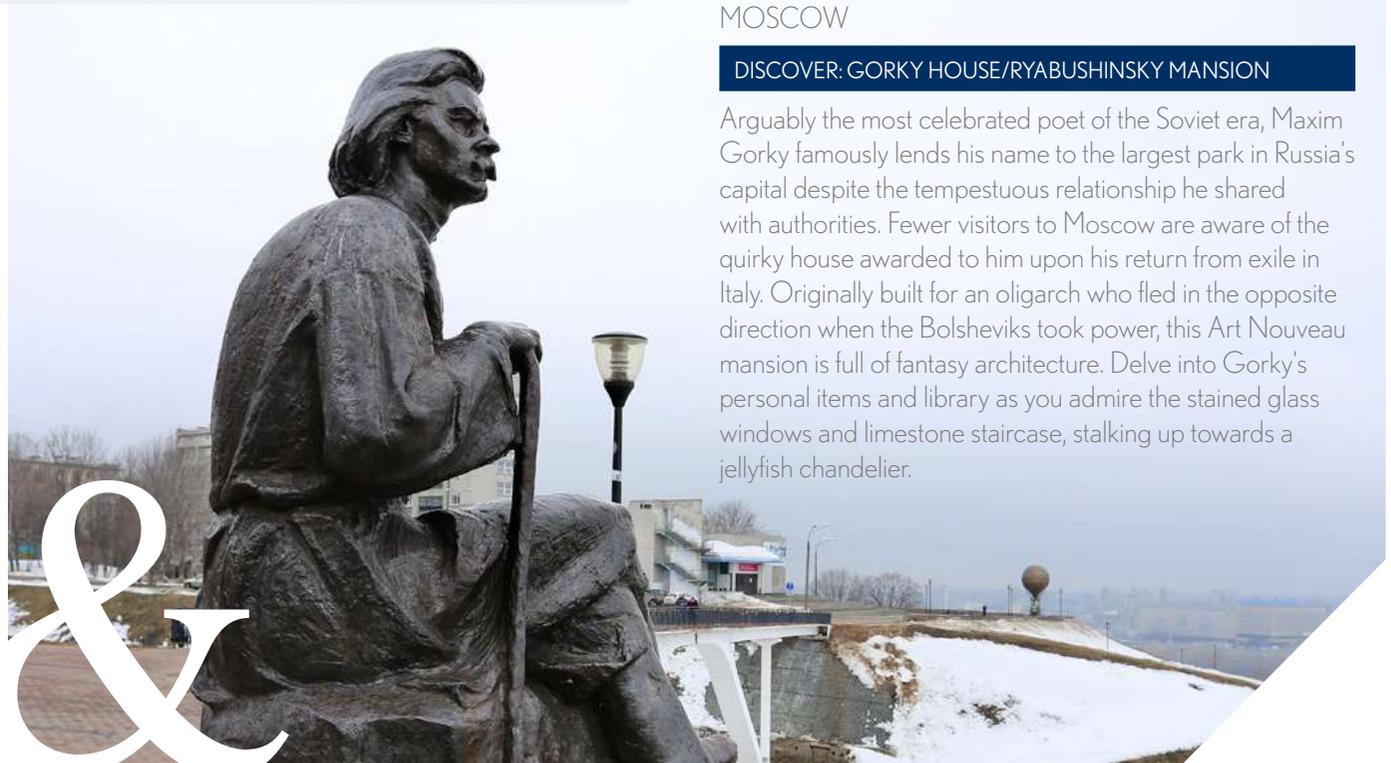




## ST PETERSBURG

### INDULGE: VODKA TASTING & STROGANOFF STEAKHOUSE

Don't leave Russia without trying the finest of its most famous export - vodka! The top Siberian producers reserve their best quality drinks for the Russians, so it's a real treat to be invited to a typical St Petersburg restaurant and enjoy an exclusive vodka tasting from the large collection. Make the most of the chance to stock up here because these brands aren't sold anywhere else. You'll no doubt work up an appetite and want to head to Europe's largest steak house in a former revolutionary barracks nearby. An experienced chef can guide you in an engaging masterclass on the secrets of cooking steaks (or beef stroganoff if you prefer!) to perfection, and the taste is all the more delicious knowing that it's all your own hard work.



## MOSCOW

### DISCOVER: GORKY HOUSE/RYABUSHINSKY MANSION

Arguably the most celebrated poet of the Soviet era, Maxim Gorky famously lends his name to the largest park in Russia's capital despite the tempestuous relationship he shared with authorities. Fewer visitors to Moscow are aware of the quirky house awarded to him upon his return from exile in Italy. Originally built for an oligarch who fled in the opposite direction when the Bolsheviks took power, this Art Nouveau mansion is full of fantasy architecture. Delve into Gorky's personal items and library as you admire the stained glass windows and limestone staircase, stalking up towards a jellyfish chandelier.



## MOSCOW

### EXPLORE: VADIM ZADOROZHNY VEHICLE MUSEUM

Fans of all things retro will love a trip to Moscow's Vadim Zadorozhny Vehicle Museum. Russia is hardly lacking in Soviet-era memorabilia, but the collection on display here is really something else. An array of vintage vehicles, including classic Alfa Romeos from the 1920s, a heavily-armoured sedan created exclusively for Stalin, and Yuri Gagarin's parade car, fill over three floors of exhibitions, giving visitors hours of time to take a closer look at Soviet motorbikes, planes, weaponry and much more.

## SPAIN

### ACTIVE: JUAN CARLOS FERRERO TENNIS MASTERCLASS, VALENCIA

If you're a tennis fan you'll surely want to step out onto the court for a true tennis masterclass in elite academy facilities, as Grand Slam-winner Juan Carlos Ferrero, once ranked the top men's single player in the world, joins you for a private coaching session. The world-class courts near Valencia have hosted the likes of David Ferrer and Maria Sharapova over the years, and several ATP professionals have made this their permanent training base. This unique and unforgettable experience gives you an understanding of how it feels to train with the stars, and Juan Carlos and his personal coach help you perfect your technique, as well as offer valuable advice on the latest suitable equipment.



## GREECE

### CHARM: TERRACE DINNER AT THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

With the mercury making its way further up the thermometer, enjoying a meal out on the terrace feels all the more charming. And there are few better dinner views than that of Athens historic Acropolis. Check out the imposing ancient monument in the early evening when things have cooled down a little, before heading across to the Acropolis Museum to discover some truly remarkable exhibits in a private after-hours visit. Then head up to the museum's terrace and witness the visual spectacle of the illuminated Acropolis as you sit back and tuck in to your meal.



## FRANCE

### ADVENTURE: ST EMILION WINE AND BIKES

Two thousand years of history have made St Emilion synonymous with wine production. Hop on a bike and gently take in the historic chateaux and their flawlessly maintained vineyards before stopping to relax and enjoy the vintage collections and a picnic lunch. The village is a picture of beauty, a result of centuries of rule by a wine brotherhood called the Jurade - glide past the pretty monuments and you will begin to understand why this was the first wine region to achieve UNESCO World Heritage status.

## SWITZERLAND

### OBSERVE: INTRICATE WORKINGS OF THE CLOCK TOWER, BERN

Perhaps a surprise considering it is Switzerland's capital, Bern has managed to stay off the normal tourist trail that includes a number of its larger neighbouring cities and mountainous areas. Better known is the country's meticulous timekeeping, and there are few better examples of this to be found than at Bern's symbolic Clock Tower, right in the heart of the UNESCO World Heritage Old Town. Ignore the crowds gathering in front of the building and instead climb up to the 16th-century clock inside. Here you can get a fascinating private viewing of the intricate mechanisms of the clockwork figures, as well as a charming view over the romantic rooftops and Rose Garden.



# Hotel Exclusive Offers



UK

NO.38 THE PARK, CHELTENHAM, THE COTSWOLDS

No.38 The Park by The Lucky Onion is a beautiful Georgian townhouse in the centre of Cheltenham, in the Cotswolds. The spacious house combines the luxury of a hotel with the independence of a bed and breakfast. Available on an exclusive basis, guests can take all of the 13 individually designed bedrooms, making it the perfect escape for a special occasion. During the day the house is an oasis of calm, a place to relax or make a few business calls. In the evening, enjoy a cocktail from the honesty bar before heading out via complimentary car to No.131 or The

Tavern. Whether you plan to stay at No.38 for a celebratory weekend away with family or whether it's a work gathering you're attending, the drawing room, open kitchen, courtyard garden and private dining room provide a unique setting for you to enjoy.

## ★ SPECIAL OFFER

Stay 3 nights, pay for 2 when you book an Excellent room. Valid for stays until 30th November 2017. Offer is not valid on Fridays, Saturdays or either of the following dates: 27th August, 19th November.

AUSTRIA

HOTEL IMPERIAL, A LUXURY COLLECTION HOTEL, VIENNA

Originally built as a private residence for Prince Philipp of Wuerttemberg, the magnificent palace at Vienna's iconic Ringstrasse was converted into Hotel Imperial for the World Exhibition in 1873. The residence of choice for royalty and high society visiting Vienna for more than 140 years, features individually styled rooms and suites with impeccable butler service on call. Precious antiques, marble baths, silk-clad walls and crystal chandeliers all exude the ambience of 19th century Vienna. Café Imperial Wien treats visitors to traditional Viennese specialities, including the fabled Imperial Torte. Awarded a Michelin star and three toques by Gault Millau, Restaurant OPUS is a gem among the world's finest gourmet temples.

## ★ SPECIAL OFFER

For Abercrombie & Kent travellers only, Hotel Imperial Vienna offers a guaranteed upgrade from Classic Category to a revitalized room in Deluxe category or higher for bookings from Sept 2017 until Apr 2018. Additionally, guests will enjoy early check in and late check out, upon availability.



# Hotel Exclusive Offers

ITALY, CZECH REPUBLIC  
& SPAIN



## ITALY

### SAN CLEMENTE PALACE KEMPINSKI, VENICE

San Clemente Palace Kempinski is located on the private island of San Clemente, only minutes away by complimentary boat from Piazza San Marco, where an exclusive resort and retreat guarantees peace, tranquility and privacy in one of Italy's most sacred and unique cities. Guests can enjoy the spacious and classic decor of 190 rooms and suites which overlook the beautiful Venetian lagoon or the centuries-old park and gardens as well as indulge in one of our three restaurants - Acquerello, La Dolce, Insieme - which offer a tantalising yet exceptional interpretation of iconic Italian and Venetian specialities. With its outdoor pool, luxurious spa and wellness centre, and recreational facilities the island is the perfect destination to unwind in total relaxation while enjoying the delights and serenity of Venice.

#### ★ SPECIAL OFFER

*For all types from The Venice Suite and above based on a three night minimum stay.*

- Complimentary Upgrade to the next room category
- Two Course Lunch for Two people at La Dolce Restaurant
- Bottle of Prosecco and Chocolates upon arrival
- Early Check-in and Late Check-out, subject to availability.

## PRAGUE

### COSMOPOLITAN HOTEL PRAGUE

Discover contemporary luxury and traditional glamour at The Cosmopolitan Hotel set in the heart of Prague. Perfectly placed on a quiet street of the Old Town within the city's vibrant shopping and sightseeing district. 106 lavishly appointed rooms and suites are decorated in elegant cream colours and sleek design, and feature luxurious bathrooms with heated floors and mirrors. The bedrooms come complete with state of the art amenities including complimentary tea & coffee, interactive TV, bathrobes & slippers or minibar, as well as many safety features. For relaxation or exercise a 24-hour gym and sauna are also available complimentary. There is free Wi-Fi throughout. Smoke-free policy. The Next Door Restaurant by celebrity TV star chef Zdenek Pohlreich.

#### ★ SPECIAL OFFER

- Special booking rates from now until December 2017.



## SPAIN

### GRAN HOTEL MIRAMAR RESORT & SPA 5\* GL, MALAGA

The Gran Hotel Miramar Resort & Spa 5\* GL ; located in the area of La Caleta, between Paseo de Reding avenue and the sea front. The principal entrance facing the Mediterranean Sea, offers marvelous views over the Bay of Malaga and is just 5 minutes from the city's top museums (including the Picasso; Carmen Thyssen; Centre Pompidou and Hermitage). The hotel will has 190 rooms and suites with spectacular sea views. All come equipped with the latest technology and exclusive services for greater guest satisfaction and comfort.

#### ★ SPECIAL OFFER

- Welcome drink upon arrival
- Amenities in room on the arrival day: Cava bottle and fruit
- One amenity in room daily
- Special discounts on spa treatments



## FRANCE

## REOPENING OF HOTEL DE CRILLON, PARIS



Reopening in 2017, Hôtel de Crillon, A Rosewood Hotel offers a delicate balance between conservation and transformation - a celebration of the spirit of Paris and French art de vivre. With an innovative Parisian esprit and soulful design bridging the 18th and 21st centuries, the legendary palace enjoys an unrivalled position overlooking Place de la Concorde in the heart of Paris, near the Champs-Élysées and Jardin des Tuileries, just minutes away from the city's most iconic sites. Offering an incomparable atmosphere of contemporary sophistication that respects the landmark's 18th-century heritage, the rooms and suites are elegantly decorated with a mix of bespoke furnishings, beautiful antiques and carefully chosen objets d'art that underscore an exceptional attention to detail. Also, an array of typically Parisian and indulgent atmospheres around two outdoor courtyards will be available for guests to relax in.

## ★NEW HOTEL★ UK

## FOUR SEASONS HOTEL LONDON AT TEN TRINITY SQUARE



Built in 1922, Four Seasons Hotel London at Ten Trinity Square is ideally located in the City of London steps away from Tower of London, Tower Bridge and River Thames. The hotel offers 100 rooms including 11 spacious suites. Discover two destination restaurants - La Dame de Pic London, the first UK restaurant by Chef Anne-Sophie Pic serving her signature French cuisine and Mei Ume, specialising in Chinese and Japanese food. The lavish spa sanctuary features a state of the art fitness centre and eight spacious treatment rooms including a luxury spa suite for couples and a special Hammam Suite for steam treatments. A 14m indoor swimming pool, vitality pool, steam and sauna rooms are also available.

## CROATIA

## SNEAK PEEK: HOTEL EXCELSIOR REVAMP



The iconic Hotel Excelsior Dubrovnik provides extraordinary views overlooking the Adriatic Sea as well as the glorious Old Town. Reopened in May 2017, after an extensive refurbishment; the hotel

combines stylish design with historic architectural design. Graced by royalty and movie stars, this spectacular five-star landmark boasts 158 beautifully redecorated rooms and suites, a transformed lobby and new restaurant Sensus. A five-minute stroll will lead you to the UNESCO Old City of Dubrovnik. After a day pounding the cobblestones, retreat to the private beach, recharge at the Energy Clinic Spa with its freshwater indoor pool or sample sumptuous seafood at Prora and a cocktail or two at the lavish Abakus Piano Bar.

## REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

## ADARE MANOR AUTUMN REOPENING

Adare Manor is currently undergoing an extensive refurbishment, restoration and expansion project. Due to reopen in Autumn 2017, the renovations will honour the building's architectural heritage as a Neo-Gothic masterpiece, whilst incorporating the latest in contemporary luxury and technological innovations. Most notably, the expansion will include a new 42-bedroom west wing which will bring the total room count to 104 guestrooms. An expansive ballroom will also be added; 4,823 square feet in size and divisible by 3, it will have capacity for 350 guests for events and international conferences. Additional enhancements include a new state-of-the-art La Mer spa, pool and relaxation area, dedicated boardroom and cinema. In addition, world-renowned golf course designer Tom Fazio will oversee a comprehensive redesign of Adare Manor's golf course. Each hole of the golf course at Adare Manor will have distinct character and strategic playability options for a complete and exceptional golf experience for all levels from forward tee to back tee players - where any hole could be the signature hole.



Despite being no bigger than the state of New Jersey, Wales is home to its very own unique language and culture. Whereas the forests and mountainous terrain have been pivotal to the principality's folklore in years past, today they provide a fun-filled playground for the active traveller. The Alps and the Pyrenees may well be mightier in stature, but the innovation and creative use of the dramatic landscape here means that the Welsh can rightfully claim their country's place as one of the world's leading capitals of adventure.

## SURF SNOWDONIA

Where better to start on this voyage of discovery than the world's first artificial surfing lake? Surf Snowdonia is a 300m-long lagoon in the Conwy Valley that represents a landmark achievement in outdoor technology. Beginners and veterans alike can pull on their wetsuits and enjoy the variably-sized waves under instruction from local surfing experts. If surfing's not the thing for you then there are also other lively activities to explore – check out the crash and splash assault course, or the gigantic inflatable blob that will see you catapulted into the sky!



## AROUND THE COAST

Inland the peaks stretch up to the sky to offer a mountain biking paradise. Trails for those of all abilities criss-cross the interior and over a dozen purpose-built centres provide world-class facilities, so it is little surprise to see the top bikers around making their pilgrimage to these valleys. The same terrain also makes for some fantastic hiking opportunities – the Snowdonia region in particular is an ideal place to put your boots on and get exploring, featuring the tallest British mountains south of Scotland (don't worry if you're struggling to keep up by now – a traditional mountain train is at hand to take you right to the top and enjoy the same panoramic views without the strain on your legs!)



## INTO THE MOUNTAINS

Of course with over 1,600 miles of coastline, you can always go surfing in the sea as well. Just as long as you don't ignore the many other options around. A specially created coastal path, stretching from Chepstow in the south all the way up to Queensferry in the north, allows walkers a chance to witness some glorious views of the natural beauty while wandering past centuries-old castles and towering cliff tops. Those feeling more adventurous might want to get a closer look by coasting round the rocky crags of Pembrokeshire in Wales' far west.

WHAT IS LIFE WITHOUT A LITTLE

# ADVENTURE?

Is there anywhere in the world that can boast such a rich range of zip wire options than North Wales? From the treetop zip safari through the forest to the first 4-person simultaneous line in Europe, there are a host of opportunities for young and old. But the ultimate is definitely the Big Zipper in Bethesda – fly like a bird up to 18m above the quarry lake. This is widely considered the fastest line in the world as you zoom down in speeds of over 100mph, but with a route stretching out over half a kilometre, you still get to enjoy the awesome views across the valley and out towards the peak of Moel Siabod.



## ZIPPING CRAZY



## SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT

Another way to witness these stunning views is from the top of the plummet tower – they won't last for long once you step off the platform and into nothingness, as you experience an authentic parachute simulation from 30m up. But if you've had your fill of the rushing mountain air by now, you might prefer to head underground instead. Again the country's history has been transformed into an opportunity, with the former Victorian mines excavated and filled with some unexpected gems. The zip theme continues with the steepest line in the UK, but kids might prefer the extensive network of trampolines stretched across six levels of bouncing fun in an illuminated underground cavern the size of a cathedral.

## Your Friend Abroad in Dubrovnik

I was born in Dubrovnik, and this is a city which very much determines your personality - all of us here are in love with our 'Pearl of the Adriatic'. Becoming a local guide some 12 years ago, I do my best to demonstrate my passion for the town when presenting it to guests. Since 2007 I've worked as an A&K Dubrovnik guide, as well as the occasional time as Guardian Angel and Tour Director, which makes my plan of activities quite varied.

Originally I graduated from the Medical School at the University of Zagreb, although I never went on to work as a doctor. Later I took another path and had the chance to develop my piano studies in Paris, where I graduated at the Ecole Normale de Musique, and was subsequently offered work as a piano accompanist. So I spent the next fifteen years in Paris, teaching and performing - the crown of my career as pianist remains my performance in Carnegie Hall in 1995!

Taking the decision to move back to my native Dubrovnik, I completed the exam for licensed guides and my very enjoyable guiding career was off and running. Though this might sound like hopping from one activity to another, I continue with my piano performances today and still enjoy teaching at the Dubrovnik Music School during the winter, when the traditional tourist season has died down.

You can never really say what a typical day of guiding in Dubrovnik might involve - I try first of all to meet the guests' interests and expectations and then to adjust my tour accordingly. In all these years I don't think I've ever done exactly the same tour more than once! Dubrovnik Old City is relatively small, but rich enough in monuments and hidden places to explore, so that we can easily personalise a walking tour. I strongly believe in enjoying my work and relish meeting people, communicating and being interactive; an enthusiastic approach makes the world of difference, rather than falling into a routine style.

In the city itself, I still consider the walk on the famous city walls as the best way to get a comprehensive idea of the perfectly preserved medieval buildings. Down below, there are a number of hidden streets, corners, and fascinating points of interest waiting to be discovered. My favourite neighbourhood to show to guests is Pustijerna, next to the cathedral, where the noble families of Dubrovnik used to live. It's also incredible to witness how the food and wine scene, not only in Dubrovnik but throughout Croatia, has improved recently - some 5-6 years ago it was hard to imagine the reputation of the restaurants here would reach such an impressive level. And we all know what an important part of travelling this is...

**Alberto Frka**  
A&K Italy's Guide in Croatia





## TOUR CONSULTANT **SILVIA BALDI** SHARES HER EXPERIENCE EXPLORING STUNNING LAKE COMO, ITALY.

*'As the sun rises up through the mist lifting off the surrounding mountains'*

'There are few more dramatic sights than walking out onto your balcony in the early morning to admire the stunning views over Lake Como, as the sun rises up through the mist lifting off the surrounding mountains. Don't miss the chance to take a ride across the lake to Bellagio, famous for its high-quality silk scarfs, on one of the beautifully restored Venetian launches. Make sure you also take some time to relax in one of Bellagio's many cafés to fully appreciate your espresso in view of the water front.

If you're a shopping enthusiast you'll want to venture south to experience the fashion paradise of Milan. Amid the historic buildings you can find any high-end brand that your heart desires. Keep an eye out for the Statue of the New Law at the colossal Duomo, which is believed to be the inspiration for the Statue of Liberty, before heading to my favourite place in the city - the Naviglio Pavese, which was once part of Milan's canal system, and now a trendy meeting point for locals and tourists alike. Go for a stroll down the wonderful canalside to soak up the atmosphere and perhaps enjoy an authentic Italian meal as the sun goes down'

**Silvia Baldi**  
A&K Italy



"BEING AN ART HISTORIAN AND A LICENSED AUSTRIA GUIDE ENABLES ME TO GUIDE AND ASSIST A&K CLIENTS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY"

Meet our Guardian Angel **Monika Kohlbacher** and read her top tips on visiting Salzburg...

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WITH A&K?

In 2004 I moved back from London to Salzburg after working for 12 years as a tour manager across Europe. The same year I was asked to join the A&K team of Guardian Angels and local guides and have remained part of it for the last 13 years, seeing the Central European market increase from year to year.

#### WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

Born, raised and graduated from highschool in Salzburg, I spent one year at Georgetown University, US. I finished my university degree in History of Arts and the Spanish and Italian languages in Austria, having spent a year doing a scholarship for my thesis about colonial architecture at the University of Quito in Ecuador. Being abroad for many years made me appreciate the treasures of Austria even more and my husband and I decided to

settle in Salzburg. Meanwhile we have 2 fantastic children and love the quiet countryside lifestyle of Salzburg. We all like skiing and hiking in the Alps and doing watersports on our Salzkammergut lakes close by, as well as attending our art shows and many music festivals.

#### WHICH SERVICES AND TOURS DO YOU OFFER?

As Guardian Angels and guides we are often the link between the clients, drivers and other suppliers, and agents, as we are "on the spot". Being an art historian and a licensed Austria guide enables me to guide and assist A&K clients throughout the country. What I really like is the challenge of working on new tours and coordinating and networking between hotels, restaurants, transport companies, and music venues, especially on tailor-made private tours. The most important thing is that, from the moment our A&K clients arrive, throughout their entire

stay until they leave the city, they have the feeling that they are being especially well treated and are welcome not only in a professional way as clients, but also as friends...the best part is when they take home plenty of positive memories from their stay in Salzburg... The tours we offer can be anything from city sightseeing, the Sound of Music tour, the Lake District, the Bavarian Alps with Königsee and the Eagle's Nest, the salt mines, hiking the ice caves, to tailor-made activities like a private concert or an apple strudel-making lesson...

#### WHICH ARE YOUR FAVOURITE TOURS AND WHY?

I love all of them, but one of my favourite tours in summer is hiking along Lake Fuschl or Lake Wolfgang and being picked up by a private boat with a lake picnic and the chance to swim in the crystal-clear waters. My favourite tour in winter is taking clients to one of our Christmas markets, going for a sleigh ride to a little village, sampling local Austrian specialities and visiting the towns where Silent Night was composed.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR MOST MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES WITH AN A&K CLIENT?

Last year clients bought 20 'Guardian Angels' for all of their grandchildren - in Salzburg and the surrounding villages there is a little silver Guardian Angel given as a present when a new child is born! It is engraved with the name and the date of birth and believed to protect the child... A few years ago there was another family with three children who wanted to go to one of our lakes. They came from a country where water is very precious and, upon showing them that the water in our lakes is so clean that you can both swim in it and drink it at the same time, they took off their clothes and tried it and...they all had tears in their eyes. It made me realise just how many things we take for granted!

#### WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS FOR VISITING SALZBURG?

If your clients are foodies, they can choose between 4 Michelin Star restaurants and many cosy local-style places to savour Austrian cuisine. One of the best ideas is the new 'Gastro-Tour', in which you can try local Austrian

specialities, fresh and seasonal, at the very places they are produced: the oldest bakery, a traditional beer brewery, a cheese farm, a chocolate and pastry specialist, etc... For the art and music lovers we offer about 50 different museums and galleries and our music festival in July and August attracts people and artists from all over the world. My advice for getting the best out of Salzburg and its surroundings is to spend two nights in a city hotel and one or two nights in one of our villages or castles nearby, perhaps on the shores of one of the lakes.

#### WHAT'S NEW IN SALZBURG?

Last year I started doing a private city tour with e-bikes involving a lot of places the 'normal tourists' don't get to see, combined with a food tasting tour to one of our markets. This can be topped off with a private concert in the 13th-century Gothic chapel of a private house in the old part of the town.

# The 5 Wonders

The capital of a country that straddles the crossroads of some considerably larger neighbours, Baku is a city whose rapid development has added a new layer to its little-known treasures. Azerbaijan's profile as a country certainly resonates more strongly now than ever before, having attracted a number of high-profile cultural, musical and sporting events over the last decade. The visitors who have flocked to the capital on the Caspian Sea can't help but be impressed by Baku's magnificent new architecture that has sprung up in the wake of the oil boom, but the Old City deserves to be explored as well, with some unfamiliar UNESCO World Heritage sites packed inside the fortress walls.



## FLAME TOWERS

The unmistakable symbol of modern Baku's development are the three Flame Towers. Stretching up 190m into Baku's skyline, the buildings are entirely covered with LED screens that allow for special lighting and graphics changes during major events, such as the Eurovision Song Contest that the city hosted in 2012.

## HEYDAR ALIYEV CULTURAL CENTRE

The Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre is named after Azerbaijan's former leader, whose rule spanned from the Soviet era through to independence. A hub for arts and cultural activities, the white-tile rooftop flows into one continuous surface and demonstrates the daring architectural innovation of award-winning architect Zaha Hadid.



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## OLD CITY

You might be forgiven for thinking that Baku has emerged in the same way as Dubai or Abu Dhabi, but it actually has a fascinating history going back many centuries. Delve into the Old City to find the Maiden Tower, whose past is shrouded in mystery and some claim is the origin of Baku's name. Not so long ago an ancient underground passage was discovered that leads from the tower to the 15th-century Palace of the Shirvanshahs, where you can witness the semi-ruined Hammam. Out in the suburbs meanwhile, the Ateshgah fire temple hints at the city's pre-Islamic culture.

## OUT OF TOWN

Oil is the driving force of Azerbaijan today, so what could be more appropriate than stripping off for a full and proper oil bath? Make the short trip out of Baku to the Naftalan Spa to try it for yourself. Unlike the Caspian oil that is responsible for the recent boom, Naftalan crude oil is too heavy to export and instead used medicinally. The locals have taken advantage of this for centuries and swear by its natural benefits - one of the earliest recordings of the practice was by Marco Polo who noticed men dunking themselves in the liquid as he made his way to China!



## & 5 SOMETHING A BIT DIFFERENT

To discover a more unusual hero of modern Baku you find yourself probing into the murky world of Soviet intelligence. Baku-born Richard Sorge was an undercover spy of such incredible success that he managed to forewarn Moscow of the Nazis' top-secret plan to invade in Operation Barbarossa. Head to Zorge Park where he is commemorated in a large and frightening monument of a pair of huge eyes staring down on you. Even with those eyes though, Sorge may have struggled to read at the Museum of the Dwarf Book- this odd collection contains thousands of books from across Europe and Asia, many over a hundred years old, including what are claimed to be the three smallest in the world at just 2mm x 2mm small.

Lafayette, nous voilà:

# LAFAYETTE, HERE WE ARE

Our comprehensive services for special interest groups ensure seamless ground operations and distinct, creative proposals. Our Tour Directors are the best in their field, with specialised knowledge ranging from art to architecture, from history to nature whatever your interests, we can tailor-make a proposal to suit you. Take a look at some examples:

2018 holds the 100th Anniversary of the end of WW1, dive into the history of this monumental occasion.

## Day 1: Arrive Paris/Belleau Wood/Épernay/Verdun

Depart CDG to visit Belleau Wood Cemetery and memorials commemorating the 26-day battle of June 1918 in which the US Marine Corps helped to rebuke a major German advance. *Château des Monthairons*

## Day 2: The St Mihiel Salient

Learn about St Mihiel Salient where the action saw concentrated use of American forces, whose detailed planning, tank and air support and audacious independent action by Colonel Patton led to the rapid expulsion of German forces from the Salient during 12-18 September 1918. *Château des Monthairons*

## Day 3: Verdun

Visit Fort Douaumont and afterwards the Ossuary of Douaumont where the bodies of 130,000 French and German soldiers lie at rest. Later visit Fleury, one of nine villages in the area completed destroyed and not rebuilt (officially designated 'a village that died for

France'). Also visit the Butte de Vauquois to see a well-preserved trench system and Fort Vaux which was gallantly defended by Major Raynal and his men against repeated German assaults before it fell on 7th June 1916. *Château des Monthairons*

## Day 4: The Meuse-Argonne Offensive

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the greatest operation conducted by the AEF during the war and visit the American Cemetery and Memorial. *Les Crayères*

## Day 5: Reims

Visit what was Eisenhower's HQ, a former schoolhouse, where General Jodl signed the German Surrender which ended World War II in Europe. Afterwards visit one of the most magnificent Gothic cathedrals in the world; here the Kings of France were crowned from Clovis to Charles X (c.500AD to 1824). The afternoon ends with champagne tasting at Veuve-Clicquot. *Les Crayères*

## Day 6: Chemin des Dames

On the plateau of the Chemin des Dames you will learn about the mutinies which befell the French armies after the disastrous Nivelle

Offensive of Spring 1917 Visit the Caverne du Dragon, 50 ft underground which German and French troops jointly occupied from July to October 1917. Stop in Chamery to visit the memorial to Theodore Roosevelt's son Quentin, shot down on 14th July 1918 and buried by the Germans with full military honours (his remains were subsequently buried along with his brother in the American Military Cemetery in Coleville). *Les Crayères*

## Day 7: Reims/Paris

En-route to Paris, stop to visit the Musée de la Grande Guerre in Pays de Meaux and this afternoon visit Picpus Cemetery where you will see Lafayette's Tomb. Later check in to our luxurious boutique hotel formerly Pershing's general quarters and the officers' club of the American Legion. *Pershing Hall*

## Day 8 Versailles/Paris

Visit the Chateau of Versailles, the enormous palace built in the 17th century for Louis XIV. Housing up to 4,000 people, the palace was the glory of the Sun King's reign and was the epicentre of political power in France at the time.

## Day 9: Depart Paris



## TAILOR-MADE INSPIRATION PORTUGAL

-  Surfing at Guincho Beach
-  Attend a soccer match - FC Benfica
-  An evening at Estoril Casino - the largest in Europe
-  Race car driving at the Circuit Estoril
-  A tour of Lisbon by privately-chartered tram
-  A helicopter flight over Lisbon
-  Sailing along the Atlantic coast
-  High-speed RIB boat ride on the Tagus River
-  A fado performance
-  A tour of Lisbon in classic VW Beetle cars
-  A tour of Lisbon by motorcycle and sidecar
-  Visit the José Maria da Fonseca wine estate
-  The Royal School of Equestrian Art at Queluz Palace
-  Tuk-tuks around Lisbon

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