Turning the Average Hotel Stay Into an Experience  
By Rachel Bandura

A lot of people - when told to think of a hotel room - picture a bed with floral sheets, a neutral colored bathroom, and a television. Hotels, for the most part, have never really been the main attraction of a destination. They are looked at as a necessity - a place to rest after enjoying a main activity that the destination offers. Several hotels around the world have defied this concept and are making their hotels an experience for their guests to remember for a lifetime.

Several hotels in Kenya have developed “treetop hotels”. These treetop hotels give a safari feel by placing you thousands of feet above sea level, while giving you the view of the wildlife below. The hotels are actually made from trees - hence the name. This type of hotel offers a very natural, scenic way to experience Kenya.

Fiji has recently created the Poseidon Undersea Resort. The hotel rooms are 40 feet underwater on the sea floor. Each room has windows that cover the ceiling and go down to the floor of the room. Guests will actually feel like they are in the room with the sea life in the clear blue ocean.

Jukkasjärvi, Sweden has come up with the first and largest ice hotel. ICEHOTEL is made completely of ice and snow, and is located right off of the Torne River. The hotel never gets colder than -5 °C, but the staff suggest guests wear thermal garments, hats, gloves, and sleep in a sleeping bag comforter. The ICEHOTEL defies the concept that a hotel is just a place that one sleeps.

These are just a few hotels that have made a simple hotel stay into a memorable experience.
Interview with La Isla Foundation’s Colin Dempsey

By Kayleigh Burns

The La Isla Foundation practices sustainable efforts through giving our support to sustainable, organic farms and eco-lodges in small communities on our educational adventure tours. Each of the farms and eco-lodges we support are examples in the way they run their respected businesses and are in line with our ideals of practicing environmentally friendly practices that are available.

- Have you seen a growth in the volunteerism industry?

I have definitely seen a growth in the volunteerism industry. During my 3 ½ years spent working on Little Corn Island, Nicaragua, I have seen an increase of travelers coming from all parts of the world seeking opportunities where they can give back to the community. Since I have joined the La Isla Foundation in Leon, Nicaragua, I have seen this in a bigger level. There are a handful of non-profit organizations here that rely heavily on volunteers to run their businesses and, without a doubt, the volunteers are there working hard to help a variety of causes.

- How do you raise awareness on La Isla globally?

Our foundation’s Founder & President, Jason Glaser, has been traveling throughout the U.S. and Europe making speaking presentations at universities, solidarity groups, union meetings, rotary clubs, and ultimately any audience that is interested in learning more about the Chronic Kidney Disease epidemic situation that we were created to help. Of course, we also have a website, Facebook, and Twitter account; all three are necessary marketing tools in our ever evolving technological world. Word of mouth is very precious as well.

Through the volunteers, Spanish school students, dance lesson participants, tourists and everybody that has an experience at the foundation, we keep in touch with them and promote them to reach out to others to continue spreading the word.

Off to the Races...With Camels!

By Shelby Christopher

Every August for the last 23 years, the Maralal International Camel Derby and Festival (MICD) has occurred in the northern region of Kenya. This annual camel derby includes participants coming from all over the world, including Australia, Japan, America, Canada, New Zealand, England, France . . . the list goes on. The derby competition receives recognition as a serious international sport where jockeys come to compete with some of the finest camels in the world. The camel derby is not only a spirited race, but it is also an extravagant festival that entails cultural shows, cycling races, dances, ceremonial displays, and various other exhibits that draw in a big crowd for a span of 3-4 days.

The annual derby combines sports and tourism into one main event and educates visitors on the differing cultural practices and activities throughout Kenya itself and the rest of the world. The theme of the Camel Derby and Festival this past year was ‘Peace for Tourism and Environmental Conservation.’ Kenya uses this event not only to boost its economy by luring in travelers from all over the world, but also to promote peace among all tourists and visitors. The International Camel Derby is an exciting sporting event that acknowledges its effect on the surrounding environment and provides an atmosphere of peace and culture for all tourists.
Turkey – A Bit Shaken Up

By Samantha Levy

Recently, Turkey has become a hot spot for travel and leisure tourists from all over the world. The country has everything a traveler could want: rich history, notable architecture, delectable cuisine and breathtaking beaches. Likewise the country spans both Europe and Asia, so tourists can reasonably argue that they were able to visit two places at once. However, on October 23rd, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake seized the country, claiming the lives of many locals and potentially damaging the bustling tourism industry. As in recent countries that have faced natural disasters, such as Australia and Japan, being proactive and getting accurate information out to current and future tourists is critical. Although travel experts are predicting that the billion dollar tourism industry in Turkey should not be affected, the step to inform the greater population is necessary when in recovery mode. Fortunately, popular areas went untouched; the earthquake never reached the populous city of Istanbul, and the Mediterranean coastline, a favorite with cruise ships, was unaffected as well. Efforts to find lost citizens and clean up damaged areas are still on-going (you can donate to the Turkish Red Crescent relief fund here: http://www.kizilay.org.tr/english/sayfa.php?t=Donate). Thus the desire to bring tourism into Turkey is more imperative than ever, as that income can significantly help with the effort to rebuild shattered communities.

Promoting Peace and Sustainability at the London Olympics

By Paige Stouch

The Olympics serve as one of the largest international events, attracting viewership and attendance from countries all over the world. These games are used to display the excellence of athletes from all areas of the world. The International Olympic Committee is the leader of the Olympic movement and seeks to “promote peace and human understanding through sport.” These games value excellence, friendship, and respect.

In the summer of 2012, thousands of athletes from over 200 different countries will participate in the Summer Olympic Games in London. Recently, the United Nations agreed to co-sponsor the Olympic Truce Resolution, which will be used as a platform to promote world peace and unity through sport. All 193 members of the United Nations agreed to co-sponsor this movement. The Olympic Truce Resolution also speaks true to the common themes of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London including: providing socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable events as well as enhancing international relations by promoting peace and stability among communities.

The London Games are seeking to create a “Lasting Legacy” through their facilities and site location. These games have already revitalized a very impoverished area of the UK. After the conclusion of the Olympic Games, the area will still benefit from the transportation improvements as well as increased job opportunities. The London site was also developed with sustainability efforts engrained in its planning. Some of these efforts include: using existing venues for Olympic facilities, creating permanent structures that can be used after the games, and building temporary structures for everything else. Their sustainability efforts also consider the long-term social and economic impacts of the area.

The London Olympics will be one of the most remembered Olympic Games, not only for the presentation of the events, but for the lasting impression that these games will have on the surrounding community.
NBA Temple Alumnus Seeks Opportunity Abroad

When Temple Alumnus Lavoy Allen was drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers this past June, he knew in the back of his mind that the NBA might not be his first professional destination. While the NBA Lockout looms, players are taking alternative opportunities to earn money and play at a high level. This August, Allen signed a one-year contract with Strasbourg IG in the competitive France Pro A League.

Playing overseas for many professionals is a tough adjustment when it comes to cultural differences and language barriers. However, the coaches for Strasbourg IG, as well as the majority of the league, speak English in games, practices and in meetings. Maintaining his body weight and staying fresh throughout rigorous pre-season training was a huge obstacle. “I never was able to cook and the first meal they gave me was a cheese and bread sandwich,” said Allen.

Along with the cultural differences of being in a new country, the game play and style of coaches were also a new experience. In America, most teams practice about two hours a day, rotate about seven or eight guys throughout a game and freelance on offense. However, in France the rotations consist of about ten guys, practices are broken into two sessions a day and they run a lot of plays. “Basketball is the same wherever you go,” said Allen. He added, “Once your coach defines your role and you become comfortable - it is easy.”

Once the lockout ends, Allen hopes to move back to America and participate in pre-season workouts with the 76ers. If he does not make the roster, he hopes to remain with Strasbourg IG.

New Ad Campaign to Promote Mexico as a Safe Destination

The Mexican president Felipe Calderón introduced 2011 as the “year of tourism” for his country. President Calderón has made it his goal to have Mexico as one of the top 5 tourist destinations in the world. Recently, the Mexican Tourism Board launched a $30 million advertising campaign that is aimed at fighting against the negative press that calls Mexico an unsafe destination for American tourists. This campaign will feature TV ads that will include actual tourists vacationing in Mexico and arriving safely back to the United States.

A unique part of this new campaign is an assignment called "Mexico Taxi Project". The individuals chosen to be part of the project will be offered a ride to the airport from their hotel. However, the tourist will be unaware that they are actually being filmed in vehicles driven by actors. The "taxi driver" will ask the vacationers several questions to get their opinions about their recent stay in Mexico. Such questions will include factors such as safety and how it plays a role in their vacation. After tourists answer the questions, the driver will reveal the camera and they will be ask to sign papers giving permission for their comments to be publicized. The website, mexicotaxiproject.com, will feature ad clips of the tourists talking about how safe they felt there.

The campaign will include a social media blitz and even billboards in places such as Times Square in New York City. The Mexican Tourism Board has a vision for restoring the image of Mexico as a safe tourist destination for Americans to visit. The negative impression and publicity that people have of Mexico must improve in order for tourists to feel safe about visiting the country. When this happens, Felipe Calderón’s dream of pushing Mexico up five places in the world list of most popular tourist destinations may come true.

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Playing for Pride, Not Money

By Seamus Corry

In terms of attendance, Ireland’s most popular sport is not soccer, hurling, rugby, or cricket - it is Gaelic football. The All-Ireland Football final, which is always played on the third Sunday of September, is the nation’s most widely attended sporting event. Gaelic football is played on a field that is 130 meters long and 80 meters wide (which is a bit larger and wider than a soccer field) with two goals at opposite ends. The goals are the same size as soccer nets, but also consist of two posts that extend above them. The object is to either put the ball into the net for three points or over the bar for one point. At the end of two thirty-minute halves, the team with the most points wins.

Teams consist of fifteen players per side. When competing teams line up on both sides of the field, unlike soccer where teams are predominately on opposite ends. Competition takes place between different counties in Ireland which are divided into four provinces. The provinces are Munster (South), Leinster (East), Connacht (West), and Ulster (North). The winner of each province will play in the semi-finals, and then the All-Ireland Final. The beauty of this competition is the fact that all the players are amateurs. Players are not paid to play, but do possess loyalty by only playing for the county they were born in. Players are not viewed as celebrities in their community, but as regular people who hold regular jobs.

When county teams advance deep into the All Ireland Championship, you can feel the communities in the county become united as they root for their home team. It’s a feeling like no other. Players play for pride and the honor to bring the Sam Maguire Cup back to their respected county.

NHL Continues International Outreach Progression

By Jonathan Golden

For the fifth straight year, the National Hockey League has opened their season by having a few teams start their individual seasons overseas in Europe. The Anaheim Ducks, Buffalo Sabres, Los Angeles Kings, and New York Rangers were amongst those partaking in the event this year. However, the teams agreed to a new idea this year: playing exhibition games against professional teams from where they were visiting. With twenty-five percent of the league’s players migrating to the NHL from countries outside of the United States and Canada, the league has made a conscientious effort to get these players seen in their home countries. Germany, Sweden, and Finland have all shown great support of the NHL in hosting these games, and the NHL has taken notice by making this an annual event.

Then, to further its progress, at the end of October the NHL finalized a television outreach plan that would enable people in the Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Ireland, Portugal, Africa, and even the Middle East, to view games. These new international broadcast deals will now allow the NHL to reach the world like never before, and could potentially increase the appeal of the sport of hockey.

With the NHL clearly taking great strides to enhance the international marketability of the league, it will be interesting to see what will come next. Could we potentially see the development of the first International Ice Hockey League?
Globalization of Sports

Due to technology and global awareness, today’s world is steadily becoming more and more globalized. Industries across the nation, including the sport industry, are starting to extend their markets overseas and are starting to promote their brands internationally due to the fact that the world seems to be getting “smaller.”

The sport of baseball appears to be turning into a truly global game, starting with arguably the top two baseball countries on the planet, the United States of America and Japan. The sport of baseball is a large attraction in Japan as they have their own professional baseball league (Nippon Professional Baseball) and the United States’ Major League Baseball is trying to integrate their specific brand of baseball into Japan because of the awareness of the game.

Baseball is considered to be Japan’s number one sport in terms of popularity and involvement, and they have finished first in both World Baseball Classics. It seems that in today’s world, Japanese baseball and American baseball are becoming closely linked. Not only are some Japanese companies such as Asahi Beer and Netz Toyota partnering with the MLB in terms of sponsorships, but the MLB has started to push games into Japan as well. According to Mark Newman of MLB.com, the league recently announced that they will be opening the 2012 series in Japan with the Seattle Mariners and Oakland Athletics playing a two-game series in Japan’s Tokyo Dome. The league will be using major star power to promote the series by having Japan’s most revered athlete, Ichiro Suzuki as part of the event. (Suzuki formerly played in Japan’s Nippon Professional Baseball League). The 2012 series will be the fourth MLB season opener in Japan and the first one since 2008. Starting with the US and Japan, the sport of baseball will soon be on a global level.
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