

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

NOTES FROM THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK: INSIDE THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

'The traveller who goes to Italy to study the tactile virtues of Giotto, or the corruption of the Papacy, may return remembering nothing but the blue sky and the men and women who live under it'.

E.M. Forester

If spectacular scenery in a relatively isolated area of a national park interests you then do consider a stay at the eight cabin **Ross Lake Resort** in the hills of North Cascades National Park in Washington State. Nothing fancy, but the cabins have to be reached by water taxi because they float on huge rafts tied up just off shore. Wonderful hiking trails and boat rentals are available. You buy your food before arriving at the park. The drive time from Seattle is about three hours. (206-386-4437).

United is now flying daily 767 service from O'Hare to Buenos Aires, Argentina. Flying time is eleven and a half-hours. This is a great get-away destination for those seeking a cosmopolitan city with European flair and wonderful, inexpensive dining.

There is a minor crime-wave directed toward tourists in the **Bahamas** that is generally going unreported. In Early August, two tourists were murdered on Paradise Island. One of the women was British and the Scotland Yard detective investigating her murder on the island was held up at gunpoint. Then, on August 26th, a member of the crew of Carnival Cruise Line's Fantasy was shot and killed in downtown Nassau during a robbery attempt. Everything may be better in the Bahamas – but not this August.

A company called **Incredible Adventures** is now offering American travelers the opportunity to fly MIG-29 and MIG-25 jets at twice the speed of sound. The program sends tour members to a private testing and research facility at Zhukovsky Air Base just outside of Moscow. The supersonic planes fly about 80,000 feet above Moscow. The four-night package including one MIG flight begins at about \$6,000. (800-644-7382)

Keiko the whale, star of the Free Willy movie that is not about our president, has finally been returned to his native Iceland in a natural habitat on **Vestmannaeyjar Isles**. His floating pen off the island of Heimaey, is a three-hour ferryboat ride from Iceland's capital, Reykjavik. Families with children can take part in a two-night eco-tour that will include interaction with local children. The island of 5,000 inhabitants is also the home to the world's largest codfish. Angela and I have been to visit the codfish on numerous vacations.

The Cubs have lost to Atlanta and **O'Hare** has lost to Hartsfield Atlanta International, the only large edifice in the city not directly owned by Ted Turner.

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.

www.traveltruth.com

1-800-445-7979

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Atlanta may now have the busiest airport in the world but O'Hare continues to improve in other, more important areas. A new control tower, for instance, will actually allow controllers to look out over the entire runway layout. The new approach control facility opened in Elgin is state-of-the-art. But the best news of all is the fact that Mayor Daley has finally found a way to open up the dining choices at O'Hare to include professional restaurant operators who actually have an inkling of the concept of customer service. Among the new residents at O'Hare, you will soon find Chili's, Wolfgang Puck's (don't miss the oriental chicken salad) and the Salad Works. But that's not all. A number of Chicago institutions will also be coming out to the terminals including the Billy Goat Tavern, well there goes my customer service theory, Berghoff's microbrewery and Connie's Pizza. The rumor that Le Francais will be opening a branch opposite the Southwest ticket counter at Midway Airport is, apparently, unfounded. Now these are positive changes but its all a bit of too little too late. Atlanta's Hartsfield has opened 160 new restaurants and stores from TGIF and Ben and Jerry's to the Disney Store. All this while O'Hare was still offering that brat and beer special for \$9.95 or whatever they were charging.

There is some exciting news for one of O'Hare biggest tenants, **American Airlines**. Beginning June 1st next year, American has received Department of transportation approval to operate nonstop service between Chicago and Moscow. American will also begin operating daily round-trip service into Amsterdam, Netherlands on May 3rd. These flights will use Boeing 767-300 series equipment.

What do you get when you fly the world's best airline in coach class? Try larger seats with winged headrests for sleeping and individual footrests, a back-of-seat in-flight entertainment system with sixty different options, along with some fine wines and even champagne. That's **Singapore Airlines** and those are some of the reasons that I think that they operate the world's best airline.

If you want to do something special for a few days around the 12th of November, consider flying to the big island of **Hawaii** to take part in the seventh annual Winter Wine Escape, a three day gourmet extravaganza. This years celebrity chefs include Dominique Tougne of Bistro 110 and Paul Bartolotti of Spiaggia in Chicago as well as James Shannon, the Chef at Commander's Palace in New Orleans. Numerous top-grade chefs from Hawaii's best resorts and restaurants will also participate. If this is short notice, you might think about placing advance reservations for next year's fest.

Experienced cruisers looking for something different and accessible might want to investigate Windstar's decision to place both the Wind Song and Wing Spirit on seven-day cruise itineraries in Costa Rica beginning next January. This will be the biggest commitment any cruise line has yet made to this recommended Central American vacation destination. Costa Rica offers a rare combination of ancient rainforests, ethereal beaches, exotic national parks, and

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.

www.traveltruth.com

1-800-445-7979

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

spectacular wildlife. The Windstar ships are casually elegant and carry 144 guests.

The upscale tour operator Abercrombie & Kent has introduced a new tour program called "Destination: The Garden of Eden" that manages to combine a safari in Kenya with a cruise to the Seychelles islands. The program lasts 16 days and features a week aboard a private yacht that can accommodate forty-five guests in outside cabins. Departure dates are scheduled for January and February, ideal travel times for these destinations.

You have probably never seen one of my favorite print ads because it appears exclusively in travel industry publications. I refer to a Grey Line of Seattle Ad that explains in large letters "Hiram Chittenden Locks in not a bagel topping". Indeed. The locks allow Seattle's Salmon to pass from the salty waters of the Puget Sound to Lake Union.

It is always rather easy to recommend restaurants in **Paris**. You could virtually choose any place with a good, steady local clientele and assume that the food is very good if not excellent. But one you might have missed is the 404 Restaurant in the third arrondissement. This is the place to go for wonderful Moroccan cuisine. If mixing plums and walnuts and chicken in a sugar dusted pie sounds like your kind of dining, Moroccan food may become a favorite. And it really is fun to eat with your hands.

Churchill & Turen Ltd.

Copyright 1999 Churchill & Turen Ltd.

www.traveltruth.com

1-800-445-7979