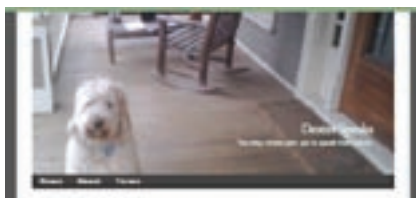



TravelBITS

FIDO SPEAKS UP




 A 4-year-old Golden Doodle, Dexter, and his BF (Best Friend) launched a new blog at www.dexter-speaks.com to help pets speak up for themselves on pet products, pet care, pet-friendly travel and other pet-related subjects. All posts by both Dexter and the blog's followers are written in "first person pet"... SOURCE: ERELEASES.COM

LITERALLY UP A TREE

 At Meadows of Dan, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia, Dan Wray, 60, helps novices climb trees. Dan has been using rope and harness to scale trees for 10 years now, and teaching others to do it for five. The payoff comes once you are high enough to a rest on a branch and take in the view... SOURCE: THE WASHINGTON POST

ALL ABOARD




 What is being touted as the most luxurious train in the world, the Maharajas' Express (www.rirtl.com), has four itineraries of six and seven nights and takes passengers to some of the most exotic destinations on the subcontinent, including Jaipur, Agra (home to the Taj Mahal), Varanasi, Delhi, Mumbai, and Udaipur (voted the best city in the known universe in the 2009 World's Best Awards), among many others. SOURCE: TRAVEL + LEISURE

Taking Turns




Planeshop (www.planeshop.net), a permanent store opening soon in the Glasgow Airport, is billed as a permanent shop with a flexible retailing concept. Brands will take over the store for a limited time, including changing the shop's exterior graphics to match their identity. SOURCE: SPRINGWISE.COM


MATCH IT UP

 A new TSA security rule requires that the names on IDs and tickets match perfectly. It is also a good idea to make sure all your travel profiles (frequent traveler programs) and IDs agree. SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES


TIME IN A BOTTLE

 In 1973, an 11-year-old traveling with his family on a cruise ship tossed a message in a bottle overboard. It survived more than 30 years at sea. The sealed bottle of Tab soda was recently discovered by a 26-year-old vacationer on Middle Caicos, in the British West Indies. The message said: "I am on the Vistafjord. Write back to Andrew Tallos." SOURCE: USA TODAY

SUITE SEAT

 US Airways will begin offering its new business class, Envoy Suite, on trans-Atlantic flights in December 2009. The redesigned cabin layout will allow each Envoy customer to face forward and away from the aisle in a fully lie-flat, 180° recline seat with direct aisle access. SOURCE: MSN MONEY

KNOW YOUR LIMITS

 Every single time you go on a flight, it is important to check the new baggage policies as they change – and a complimentary solution is provided by www.LuggageLimits.com where you can easily look up the luggage restrictions/limits. SOURCE: WWW.POTHOSCEOMUSINGS.COM


Bus Chase



BusJunction, a search site for buses, has just added Yelp ratings to its website so that travelers can see not only what bus companies offer the best price, but also which buses and routes get good (or bad) reviews. To access the reviews, go to BusJunction.com and click on the stars underneath the company symbols.


SOURCE: WALL STREET JOURNAL

ISLAND ARTS

 Bermuda's arts community was abuzz when the Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art (www.bermudamasterworks.com) opened at the Bermuda Botanical Gardens last spring to show its collection of island-inspired paintings, including works by Georgia O'Keeffe and Mardsen Hartley. Its latest exhibition, "We Are Sailing," examines Bermuda's connection with the sea, and includes Winslow Homer's watercolor "S.S. Trinidad."

SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES


UPSIDE-DOWN STAY

 At Berlin's Propeller Island City Lodge, each of the 30 rooms is weird in its own way. One room is made to look like a brightly-painted medieval town, with an ultra-mini golf course surrounding the castle bed. Another has furniture attached to the ceiling, another has coffins for beds, and still another has lion cages on stilts (the website claims that kids "love to sleep" in them). Then there's the Freedom Room, which resembles a prison, complete with a toilet next to the bed – oh, that German humor!

SOURCE: ETURBONEWS.COM


HIT THE INTERACTIVE TRAILS



 Transit and Trails (www.openspacecouncil.org) is the first-ever trip planner focused on parks and trails and is interactive. Once users enter their start location and choose a destination, they can get a detailed trip itinerary with a map, transit times, fares and walking directions to and from the transit stops.

SOURCE: BREAKINGTRAVELNEWS.COM

A SENSE OF PLACE

 A trip to Charlottesville, VA, located at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is a way to enjoy true culinary magic. Restaurants specialize in local foods, shops sell outstanding organic cheeses and produce, and bakeries and breweries invite you to come inside and talk with owners.

SOURCE: SOUTHERN LIVING

WHERE TO HANG YOUR HAT



These new lodging search sites help you find that perfect place for the night.

- **Raveable.com:** Provides a comprehensive view of hotels across the United States by aggregating and summarizing more than 35 million reviews of some 55,000 U.S. hotels.
- **TripKick.com:** Detailed information on which hotel rooms to request – which rooms are oversized, which have great bathrooms or are quieter than others – and which floors are better and which to avoid.
- **Oyster.com:** 13 professional reporters independently review hotels, paying for their own stays. Once a review of a particular hotel has been posted online, Oyster invites other travelers who've visited the same hotel to add their comments and reviews.
- **Away.com:** Recently launched its new "Best Resorts & Lodges Guide" – a comprehensive directory of the top domestic and international resorts and lodge.

SOURCE: SPRINGWISE NEWSLETTER

WAY TO GO



At Six Senses Hideaway Zighy Bay in Oman, arriving guests strap on a paraglider harness and take a running leap off a cliff to arrive at this exclusive resort. For less daring guests, the resort offers alternate arrival experiences, which include a scenic 15-minute speed boat trip or a 4x4 drive down from the top of the hill overlooking the bay.

Guests arriving at new St. Regis Deer Crest Resort in Utah will experience the "WOW" factor. Guests take a private 500-foot-high funicular, the first and only at a North American ski resort, which scales the steep slope between the resort's main lodge to arrive at the hotel itself. The ride takes just 90 seconds, delivering guests to the "crest" with stunning panoramas of Deer Valley.

SOURCE: LUXURY TRAVEL

SNOW MADE



The Budweiser International Snow Sculpture Championships returns to Breckenridge, CO, for the 20th year, from January 26-31, 2010 with 16 teams from around the globe invited. The finished pieces are achieved without the use of power tools, internal support structures or colorants – just hand tools and the ingenuity of the sculptors.

SOURCE: PR NEWSWIRE