

# The New York Times

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TRAVEL

## Hotel and Tour News: Hollywood History in Puerto Vallarta

### IN MEXICO, A BOUTIQUE HOTEL WITH A HOLLYWOOD HISTORY

The filming of the 1964 John Huston movie “The Night of the Iguana” attracted the actor Richard Burton and his then mistress Elizabeth Taylor to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, where he bought her a house on a cobblestone lane and another across it for himself. Long vacated by the celebrities, the dual villas, connected by a bridge modeled after the Bridge of Sighs in Venice, reopened this week as a nine-room boutique hotel known as [Casa Kimberly](#), the original name of Ms. Taylor’s home. The hotelier Janice Chatterton, who owns the nearby Hacienda San Angel hotel in another of Mr. Burton’s former homes, renovated the original bridge as well as Ms. Taylor’s bedroom suite featuring a heart-shaped, pink marble bathtub and a private pool and Jacuzzi on the wraparound terrace. Other rooms feature colonial-style four-poster beds and chandeliers, and shared amenities include a swimming pool, a two-treatment-room spa, an open-air restaurant and a sun terrace that overlooks the terra-cotta rooftops of town. Rooms from \$434.

### REVISITING PROHIBITION IN CHICAGO

The tour company [Tauck](#) and documentary filmmaker Ken Burns are again teaming up on a trip, this time to Chicago to explore the Prohibition era. The five-day trip, Sept. 19 to 23, includes an address by and reception with Mr. Burns, whose series “Prohibition” is being rebroadcast on PBS later this month. The fall itinerary includes a visit to the Pilsen neighborhood where Czech immigrants popularized beer, a Prohibition-era speakeasy and a class in making period cocktails. Because gangsters like the infamous Al Capone thrived on the illegal sale of liquor during Prohibition, organized crime is a sub-theme of the tour, which includes a visit to the site of the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre and the theater where John Dillinger was killed. The group will also visit Oak Park and its many buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, another subject of a Burns documentary. The trip costs \$4,680 a person.

## **NEW ROOMS FOR MALL OF AMERICA SHOPPERS**

Shoppers visiting the country's largest mall, the Mall of America just outside of Minneapolis, will find new quarters in which to put up their weary feet. The new 342-room [JW Marriott Minneapolis Mall of America](#) offers direct access to the complex (which has more than 500 shops) in addition to housing the restaurant, Cedar + Stone, Urban Table, which highlights ingredients from within a 200-mile radius. The lobby bar serves local craft beers and cocktails made with locally distilled spirits. There is also an indoor pool and, for those who want to explore the city, a light rail station on the downtown-bound Blue Line nearby. Rooms from \$229.

## **MYSTERY TRIPS, EXPLAINED**

The London-based custom travel planner [Brown + Hudson](#) has launched a service that focuses on the why of travel, rather than the where. Clients are interviewed extensively on their likes, dislikes, goals and practical matters like budget and length of trip, after which the agency prepares a mystery itinerary revealed only when the traveler reaches the airport. Pitched to high-end experiential travelers, these mystery trips strip the client of control and responsibility, which the company believes sparks curiosity and personal renewal. "In talking with clients we've discovered that one of the most interesting aspects of the idea is not so much the surprise and not knowing the destination, but rather the internal journey that people take whilst thinking about their outcome before they leave. Freed up from thinking about the destination they take a journey into themselves," Philippe Brown, the co-founder of the company, wrote in an email. Weeklong trips start at \$18,500 a person.

## **A NEW INN IN NEW ENGLAND**

In time for ski season, the new [Taconic](#) hotel opened this week in Manchester Village, Vt. Named for the nearby Taconic Mountain range and inspired by traditional Vermont inns, the clapboard complex offers 84 rooms in the central lodge, featuring a wraparound porch, and three free-standing cottages nearby. All rooms feature oak furniture, historic photos and amenities including locally made walking sticks. Its adjacent restaurant, the Copper Grouse, highlights seasonal dishes and Vermont beers. Taconic is about 20 miles from [Stratton Mountain](#) ski resort, and guests have access to two cross-country skiing and snowshoeing courses, one private, closer by. Rooms from \$269.

## **HOLIDAY DEAL IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

Cyber Monday has passed, but some travel deals continue. The adults-only all-inclusive resort [Chic Punta Cana](#) in the Dominican Republic is offering a four-night stay for \$833 a person, double occupancy, over the holidays, Dec. 21 to Jan. 9, with what it says is \$500 worth of perks, including a massage for two, dinner at the chef's table, day-spa access and upgraded rooms.