

**GOING
PLACES**

**New Orleans tour
features Katrina sites**

Gray Line New Orleans bus tours of damage caused by Hurricane Katrina have begun taking tourists to some of New Orleans' most misery-stricken spots.

For \$35 per adult, \$28 for children, passengers were taken past the Superdome, the Convention Center and neighborhoods damaged by Katrina and the subsequent flooding.

Residents have been at odds over whether the tours are crass and morbid exploitation, or a good way to help people grasp the enormity of the disaster.

The three-hour tours, called "Hurricane Katrina — America's Worst Catastrophe," start at the edge of the French Quarter, then drive past the Superdome and Convention Center, where thousands suffered in the heat for days without food or water.

The company has pledged to give \$3 per ticket to Katrina-related charities.

Information: (800) 535-7786; www.graylineneworleans.com.

— *The Associated Press*

THIS & THAT

Woody's London

Fans of the new Woody Allen movie "Match Point" can get a free map to help them visit places shown in the movie, such as the Tate Modern, Royal Opera House, Notting Hill, Chelsea and Seven Dials in Covent Garden.

Call (800) 462-2748 or download the map, and those for other movies as well, at www.filmlondon.org.uk/moviemaps. Maps and city information are also available at www.visitlondon.com.

— *The Boston Globe*

The Fifth Annual AAA Travel Faire will be held today from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Cabrillo Pavilion Arts Center, 1118 E. Cabrillo Blvd. Admission is free.

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The Los Angeles Public Library's display of more than 60 vintage travel posters includes posters for the 1936 Munich Olympics, the ocean liner Normandie and Oaxaca, Mexico. The show runs through May 7 at the Central Library, 630 W. Fifth St.

Information: (213) 228-7500; www.lapl.org/events.

— *Staff and wire reports*

The top hotels in Mexico and Central/South America, from Travel + Leisure magazine.

1. La Casa Que Canta, Zihuatanejo, Mexico
2. Four Seasons Hotel, Mexico City
3. Ritz-Carlton, Cancun, Mexico
4. Las Mananitas, Cuernavaca, Mexico
5. Hotel Monasterio, Cuzco, Peru
6. Four Seasons Resort, Punta Mita, Mexico
7. Las Ventanas al Paraiso, Baja, Mexico
8. Llao Llao Hotel & Resort, Bariloche, Argentina
9. Blancaneaux Lodge, San Ignacio, Belize
10. Hotel Villa del Sol, Zihuatanejo

— *Chicago Tribune*

A movable feast



The King Pacific Lodge is moored from May to October in the shelter of Barnard Harbor on Princess Royal Island, B.C., Canada.

STEVE HAGGERTY PHOTOS



Guide Marlene Berg points out a school of fish in the clear water of Whale Channel. The lodge features several outdoor excursions.

**Floating lodge makes
Princess Royal Island
its summer home**

By ANNE Z. COOKE
and STEVE HAGGERTY
NEWS-PRESS CORRESPONDENTS

Now you see it — lights glowing in the windows, fishing boats moored at the dock — now you don't. It depends on the month.

Come mid-May, King Pacific Lodge leaves its winter berth in Prince Rupert, northern British Columbia, and floats south on the Inside Passage to Barnard Bay, on Princess Royal Island.

Tugboats, nudging the 17-room luxury hideaway past a herd of startled sea lions snoozing on menacing-looking rocks, tow it to the far shore where workmen chain it to giant logs anchored in solid ground.

The two-story lodge, built on a salvaged 60-by-120-foot U.S. Navy barge, doesn't sink, or even move. It doesn't even leave a footprint. When the ducks fly south, King Pacific Lodge sails back to Prince Rupert, leaving no trace of garbage dumps, gummy oil spills or trampled wildflowers.

"Most of the time this is wilderness," said Marlene Berg, our kayaking guide, as we paddled over to Cameron Cove. "When we leave, you'd never know anyone had been within 50 miles."

HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME

In summer, though, Barnard Bay rocks. Humpback whales, migrating from Hawaii, breach and dive, scooping up krill and herring. Spawning salmon — kings and silvers (chinook and coho) — swim through Whale Channel and into the bay, heading for the streams where they were born. Orcas, year-around residents, hunt tirelessly for porpoises and seals.

In the forest, Sitka deer, gray wolves, black bears and bald eagles stay in the shadows. Then, in late May, the first guests begin to arrive.

It was early August by the time we headed north, flying to Vancouver and from there on a KPL charter flight to Bella Bella. There we



TOM DE WALT / NEWS-PRESS

transferred to a 10-passenger Grumman Goose, with floats, for the last leg over miles of mountains and fjords.

From a distance, the lodge looked like a speck. And then we were on the water and taxiing up to the dock, where General Manager Ken Beatty and his staff were waiting to welcome us.

Though a dozen wilderness activities are right on the doorstep here in the Great Bear Rain Forest, the salmon fishing is so good that some guests come just for that.

"I'm not quitting until I get a couple of kings," said Russell Benioff, a retired business owner from San Francisco. Mr. Benioff,

Please see **CANADA** on **D18**



Foch Lake is a 30-minute floatplane trip from King Pacific Lodge.



The Great Hall offers relaxation after a day in the wilderness.

By MARY ANN ANDERSON
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWS SERVICE

When it comes to a little Valentine's romance, there's a special place for everyone. Consider these Top 10 destinations across the globe for lovebirds struck by one of Cupid's arrows:

● The seaside city of **Savannah, Ga.**, with its unique blend of history, striking 18th and 19th century architecture, and modern-day appeal, is romantic in any season, but espe-

cially in winter when the weather is mild enough for long, leisurely walks down cobblestone streets and through those verdant and famously sun-drenched squares adorned with massive magnolias and oaks. And River Street, with its rows of cafés and taverns, is perfect for sitting outside and savoring an espresso and sampling local pastries. Savannah is also well-known for its bed-and-breakfast inns — the historic Ballas-

Please see **ROMANCE** on **D17**

Flying is about to become enjoyable again. Airlines will continue to struggle financially, but a new (actually, old) graciousness will slowly emerge. Flight attendants of all ages will be happy to see us, greeting everyone with the same warm smile whether they're sitting in first-class or the last row of coach. This compassionate attitude will also infect passengers, who, on boarding, will thank

the crew for preparing the cabin, never travel with a carry-on bag that couldn't fit in a small sink, and always ask the people behind them if it's OK to recline their seats. The debate about cell phone use will fade away as passengers take a genuine interest in their seatmates' life stories. Deplaning will take a little longer, as each

Please see **SWICK** on **D18**



STEVE HAGGERTY PHOTOS

From the deck, the sun sets on another eventful day at the King Pacific Lodge.

Rough it by day, luxuriate by night

■ CANADA

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who went fishing with his favorite guide, Ryan Bowes, was on the water all day, every day, rain or shine, and took home the limit, frozen and vacuum packed.

"I love to eat it," said his wife, Joelle. "We'll have a big family barbecue when we get home. But mostly I'm here to watch the whales — and go to the spa — and keep Russell company."

The artist in the group, Greg Burr, had no intention of "killing fish. I'd much rather kayak or paint the scenery," he said, taking his watercolors and paddling across the bay.

ON THE TRAIL

Honeymooners Ken and Susu Notare tried everything, including our hike to Whalen Lake, in a valley between two low mountains. The two-mile trail wound through stands of hemlock and cedar, then followed a fast-flowing salmon stream up to the lake.

Motoring leisurely back to the lodge, our sharp-eyed guide, Floyd Dundas, one of a dozen Git Ga'at people (a Tsimshian First Nations group) employed at the lodge, sighted a pair of humpback whales bubble-netting for herring.

"Got your cameras out? Watch that spot, right there," he said, as he turned the boat to face the circle of bubbles popping on the surface, 30 feet away. Suddenly, the bubbles were followed by a huge eruption and two giant heads with mouths agape.

King Pacific Lodge's three-, four- and seven-day outings include your room, round-trip flights from Vancouver to the lodge, all meals, wine, drinks, sporting gear and equipment, and activities in and around the lodge. This includes all ocean fishing (salmon), fishing gear, hiking, kayaking, wildlife walks and guided "cultural" visits to the Git Ga'at fishing camp at nearby Hartley Bay.

IN THE AIR

There are some special excursions, however, and all helicopter trips — for fly fishing, mountain climbs and flight seeing — are priced separately. Be sure to try at least one of them. We went on one amazing half-day kayaking trip to Foch Lake, with Ms. Berg as guide and fellow guests Roger and Corky Gelder, from Atlanta.

"This is fantastic, the most amazing place I've ever been," said Mr. Gelder, staring in amazement as we landed below steep rock walls rising behind the lake.

While we all gaped at the waterfalls, Ms. Berg pulled out three of the four kayaks stashed in the bushes, handed out life jackets and showed us how to steer with the foot pedals. Then we were off, paddling for two hours past waterfalls and wildflowers.

The most unusual excursion — book it in advance — is the "Quest for the Kermode Bear," a full-day guided search for one — or if you're lucky, more — of the rare white bears indigenous to the area.

These "spirit bears," caused by a recessive gene among indigenous black bears, make up 10 percent of

Tell others about your best travel experiences, including but not limited to attractions, lodging, dining and tour guides.

● The Foundry Grill at Sundance Resort, (800) 892-1600; www.sundance-resort.com: "After a glorious day of skiing and the added pleasure of watching Robert Redford ski by me looking fabulous with eyes as blue as the Utah sky, we stopped at the Foundry Grill for a bowl of its signature Tortilla Soup. Chef Thomas Mechan was kind enough to share his secret — homemade vegetable stock made with the best available fresh southwest vegetables of the season. After dicing onions and sautéing these in oil, he adds them to the vegetable stock along with canned diced tomatoes, tomato purée, cumin, cilantro, salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with crisp tortilla strips, diced fresh avocado and a lime wedge. "Sundance Merlot from Judd's Hill in Napa Valley was medium bodied, with the right amount of tannin to compliment the piquant soup."

Send recommendations to Al Bonowitz, Santa Barbara News Press, P.O. Box 1350, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1350 or e-mail abonowitz@newspress.com.

Include your name, address and phone number and the address, phone number and Web site of the place or person you are recommending.

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side will insist the other go first. But you will leave with a whole new collection of e-mail addresses.

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Taking the train will be the fashionable way to travel this year, as Americans rediscover the beauty of slow, scenic, overland journeys. Despite the newly friendly skies, people are going to use trains for everything from business trips (no need to turn off electronic devices — ever!) to family vacations. The biocoastal crowd will be filling up transcontinental sleepers and, for the rich, the new status symbol will not be a Lear jet but a private, customized Pullman car. (Imagine being so important you can take your sweet time getting someplace.) John Travolta will exchange his pilot's cap for an engineer's hat, extending his Florida property so that it includes a nearby station.

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The designer hotel is so 2005. People no longer want to stay in a place that charges a fortune while treating them like peasants. They're tired of getting haughty glances from unshaven doormen, exhausted from trying to figure out how to turn on the shower, bored with color schemes that span the spectrum of white. People want a welcoming, comfortable, nonthreatening place to stay. And they don't crave a generic trendiness that makes them feel as if they could be anywhere. (The Schrager-inspired hotel has become the hip crowd's Holiday Inn.) Making a comeback will be the well-established, reasonably-priced downtown hotel with a distinctive lobby that dou-

bles as a civic living room, ball rooms hosting charity luncheons, old black and white photographs hanging in the corridors, and a neighborhood bar where local bands play on the weekends and a guy named Gus mixes the drinks. A sense of place will triumph over a sense of cool.

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In a similar vein, Americans will be in search of the authentic and the unhyped this year. Cities like Little Rock, Ark., and Columbus, Ohio, will become popular vacation destinations (both boast venerable downtown hotels), as will states like Iowa, Alabama and Minnesota. Ethnic festivals, country auctions, roadside diners, town square bandstands, main street movie theaters, pie-eating contests, barbed wire shows, chili cook-offs, birding trails, powwows and rodeos will all be big attractions. The Texas State Fair will outdraw Disney World.

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After years of talk about globalization, Americans are going to take an interest in the globe. National magazines will begin publishing articles on countries other than Iraq, and the glossy travel magazines will start writing about the world beyond resorts and spas. By summer, five of the top 10 non-fiction best sellers will be travel books. Cable as well as network TV will show subtitled foreign films every night. The most popular reality show will follow a group of average-looking Americans as they travel through South America perfecting their Spanish. Our students will lead the world in knowledge of geography.

Thomas Swick is travel editor of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.



Angler Anne Oldberg and guide Ryan Bowes display her king salmon. Guests who catch and release a chinook salmon weighing more than 50 pounds are offered one free return trip the following season.



A pair of humpback whales gulp down whole schools of fish near Campania Island.

the total bear population, according to Mr. Beatty. "Your chances of seeing one when you're with a Git Ga'at guide are pretty good," he said.

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

Though the Canadian Government and the Git Ga'at are at odds over ownership of the Great Bear Rain Forest, the tribe controls the local coastal area, including Barnard Bay. Interested in promoting tourism on a limited scale, they partner with KPL's owner, Hideo "Joe" Morita, son of the owner of Sony Corp.

Mr. Morita, a dedicated environmentalist, pays a "foreshore" lease to the Git Ga'at and hires a certain number of their members as guides.

In return he gets exclusive rights to the bay, and to operate the lodge, his experiment in low-impact environmental tourism.

"You've seen what it's like when millions of people overrun sensitive places like Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon," said KPL President Michael Uehara. "Joe believes tourism should be self-sustaining. We provide a unique wilderness adventure here, for 34 guests maximum, with gourmet cuisine and five-star luxury," said Mr. Uehara. "But look out the window. It's the place that really matters."

COMFORT COUNTS

For the visitors, the inside mat-

IF YOU GO

Reservations: Because charter plane schedules are fixed, guests typically stay for three, four or seven days. For dates, activities, suggested clothing and other information, call (888) 592-5464 or e-mail info@kingpacificlodge.com. Visit www.kingpacificlodge.com or www.rosewoodhotels.com.

Prices: All-inclusive rates (including round-trip flights from Vancouver to the lodge), for three, four and seven night stays, per person, are \$3,700, \$4,800 and \$7,650 for a Wilderness View room. Ocean View rooms are \$4,200, \$5,450 and \$8,800. Three suites are also available. Children 12 and under sharing with parents get a 30-percent discount. Spa treatments and helicopter excursions are extra.

Fishing: Salmon fishing, with motor boats, rods, gear and instruction are included in the basic cost. Filleting, vacuum packing, freezing and shipping boxes are also free.

Getting there: Fly to Vancouver (YVR: www.yvr.ca), in British Columbia, Canada, and transfer to King Pacific Lodge's charter flight to Bella Bella, about 300 air miles north. From Bella Bella, a second charter float plane continues north for 90 air miles to Princess Royal Island.

Information: Call British Columbia Tourism at (800) HELLOBC (435-5622) or visit www.hellobc.com.

ters, too. The lodge is elegant but spare, with local red and yellow cedar paneling, polished fir floors, peeled log beams and slate in the entry and high-traffic passages. Cocktail hour drinks are served in the Great Hall in front of a tall and impressive rock fireplace.

The furniture is first quality, with soft leather sofas and plush upholstered chairs, custom-made light fixtures, a self-serve bar and panoramic windows facing west over Barnard Bay. Native Tsimshian art graces most of the rooms. Two full-time massage therapists staff the spa, which has two treatment rooms, steam room, sauna and a hot tub, also overlooking the bay.

The "locker room," intelligently located next to the front entry, is where all-weather gear is stored, including waterproof boots, each piece labeled with your name. The two-piece outfits fit over clothes and keep you not just warm but dry when you're fishing. On your way in, take it off and hang it up until next time.

When it rained — which it will — some of us continued to fish, while everyone else gathered in the game room to work at the fly-tying bench, play table-top hockey, check e-mail on the computer or dig into the library's collection of best-sellers and Pacific Northwest nature references.

If you like to watch the sun set, the front deck is the place. Or you can join the group — you will have bonded by this time — in front of the fire to compare the day's events. Next winter, when the lodge and the guests have gone, it's memories that will last.

Anne Z. Cooke and Steve Haggerty are Marina del Rey-based freelance writers.