

# 10 DESTINATIONS FOR THE 'MATURE' MARKET

Barbara Ann Rosenberg

School, marriage, children, work, money — they're all major priorities of life. But, as time marches on, priorities often change. For many of us, particularly as we pass the half-century mark with perhaps more leisure time and more discretionary income, travel moves way up in rank — frequently to a top rung on the ladder.

It used to be easy for some people to move from the "I want to" to the "I'm going to" stage and just take a train to London or Paris or Rome to sightsee and shop for wonderful things — until the dollar took a beating in Europe and the Gulf War had everybody sitting close to the hearth and not going anywhere except to California or Florida.

But now, happily, the dollar is, if not entirely quiet, at least contained. And, Europe is not the only destination worth considering at this stage, although it is a bit — albeit generally expensive — place to go to explore, eat, drink and

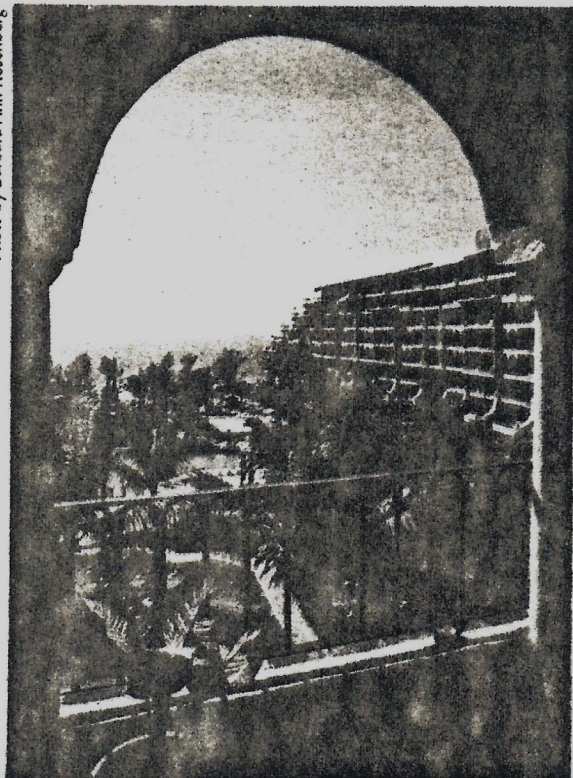


We've found 10 appealing places for travelers (dyed-in-the wool or would-be) to consider: some pretty near, some pretty far, some exotic, some tame, some off the beaten track, and some on. In other words, hopefully, something for everyone to at least think about. All of these destinations are close, or at least reasonably close, to health care, thus relieving one understandable apprehension of the mature traveler.

We've tried to suggest something for everyone and every pocketbook, whether lush or lean — governed only by your taste and your budget. We'll start with our

"picks" right here in the United States and range farther afield: Florida (Lee Island Coast — Sanibel and Captiva Islands); Arizona (Phoenix and Sedona); California (Parlor Car Tour from Los Angeles to San Francisco or vice versa); Alaska (fly to Seattle or Vancouver and then cruise; Canada (Montreal and Quebec);

Photo by Barbara Ann Rosenberg



Above: A view from the balcony of Velas Vallarta, and all-suite resort in Marina Vallarta, Mexico. Left: The beaches at Sanibel Island, and neighboring Captiva Island, off Florida's west coast, are famous for their abundance of seashells.





## Travel

Jamaica (Ciboney in Ochos Rios); Interhostel (several European destinations); Mexico (Velas Vallarta); Israel (a spa); and Morocco (Marrakesh, Hotel Tichka).

We didn't come up with these suggestions lightly. We talked to a couple of travel agencies to get their input on choosing places for the "mature" market. Susan Saner, vice president of Don Rosen Travel, said, "It's hard to generalize what people in the "mature" market really want; there's such variation among them. Some people are really energetic and like adventure travel, and others prefer it more sedate."

Amy Gold, also with Don Rosen, added, "We're as much a psychiatrist as a psychiatrist; we listen to what people say and then book accordingly."

Polly Mahorn, a tour leader for Garlin Travel, said, "I'm a senior citizen myself and I lead trips. The people who go with me want everything planned for them. If people have to fend for themselves in any way, it's a disaster."

So, with these opinions in mind, we're suggesting some independent travel and some guided tours.

### FLORIDA

People voice strong opinions on this state: "I love it, and I can't wait to go (or go back)" or "Let's go someplace else." Mostly, though, those pronouncements come from having been to some of the more populated East Coast resorts. The Lee Island Coast, on the Gulf of Mexico, is very different from anything on the other side. The major attractions are two: Sanibel Island and Captiva Island.

You leave the mainland at Fort Myers and travel by car across a causeway that leads you to Sanibel, the more developed and populated of the two islands, famous for its shelling and the "Sanibel Stoop" that comes from walking the beach head down to search for the many varieties of shells that wash ashore day after day. Stay at one of the lovely hotels on the island

(like the Hilton) and feel like a beachcomber.

Cross another causeway and you find yourself on Captiva Island, much more remote in feeling, sort of like a South Sea Island. As a matter of fact, the South Seas Plantation is the prime resort property there, carrying out the feeling. Located right on the tip of the island, the 330-acre Plantation, as everyone calls it, offers something for everyone — golf, sailing, fishing, water-skiing or quiet relaxation. Accommodations run from \$130 off-season for a room for one or two to \$575 in high season for a three-bedroom cottage sleeping five or six.

Just before crossing the bridge to the islands is another spectacular property: Sanibel Harbor Resort and Spa, a self-contained resort with two-bedroom condominiums, a 40,000-square-foot Spa and Fitness Center, and 13 lighted tennis courts.

### ISRAEL

For a change of pace, consider a trip to a luxury spa in Israel. Usually, when people think of a visit to Israel, they think "mission" or "relatives" or "sightseeing" — not "spa." Are they in for a surprise.

While some attractions and appointments at the Jerusalem Hyatt Regency, a five-star, deluxe hotel, are nearly spa "fixtures" (sauna, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, weightlifting machines, massages, special diets, fitness classes, etc.), this hotel offers something unique — mud. It's not just any old mud, either. It's mud from the Dead Sea, mud that is

sulfur-rich and touted as therapeutic for skin and hair and various ailments.

If you don't relish the idea of traveling just for a mud-pack, there's the rest of that state-of-the-art equipment and the personalized attention, plus delicious, non-fattening food and, just outside your windows, stunning views of the Old City. It's treatment and food for the body, coupled with treatment and food for the soul.

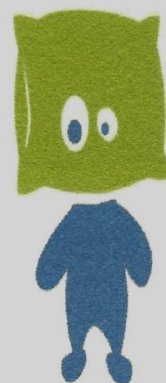
### INTERHOSTEL

If you're not in the mood for a physical regimen, at least not as your major emphasis, but want something that provides food for the mind, you might want to think about Interhostel, conducted by the University of New Hampshire. Interhostel bills itself as "An Exciting Way to Travel and Learn" for the intellectually alert and physically active mature adult over 50 who enjoys travel and believes that education is a lifelong process.

This year, there will be programs in several European countries, from the British Isles to Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France and Spain. Although some of the booking deadlines have passed for this summer, there's always the possibility of a last-minute cancellation. And, there's still time for a two-week program in Germany, Ireland and England.

The cost for the program includes group educational activities, admission to galleries and museums, listed performances, ground transportation for programmed

*continued on page 18*



## INTERHOSTEL





## Travel

continued from page 17

events, lodging, three meals daily and round-trip transportation to the airport for the group's designated flight. The price is guaranteed in dollars once published and runs roughly from \$1,400 to \$1,600, plus airfare. Keep in mind that you'll be living like a student, which may mean that you share a bath.

### CRUISES TO ALASKA

In keeping with her philosophy of fully escorted

touring for the "over 50" set, and knowing that a cruise might fill the bill, Polly Mahorn says she really enjoys the Holland America cruises to Alaska, both from Seattle and Vancouver. "Wonderful," she says. "It's fascinating and so beautiful. The glaciers are really extraordinary."

Depending on the vessel, the week-long cruises cost anywhere from a \$1,000 for an inside cabin in low season to \$2,750 for an outside cabin in high season, with a generous range in between. Add-ons are available for side trips of various sorts, including delightful Seattle or fascinating Vancouver.

### CANADA

Much closer to home but still in Canada, there are several destinations to keep in mind, with Montreal and Quebec chief among them. If you want to get there and see the scenery en route, without the bother of driving, you might want to consider one of the four-day Starr Tours bus trips that take you from one of 14 pickup points between Wilmington, Del., and Tren-

ton, N.J., directly to that charming 350-year-old metropolis of Montreal on the St. Lawrence River.

The trip includes three nights at the centrally located Queen Elizabeth Hotel, exploration of Old Montreal, Mt. Royal Park and other sites, as well as some free time for shopping the chic shops and exploring Rue St. Denis, the main cultural avenue of French-speaking Montreal, with its vibrant restaurants, cinemas, cafes and bookshops. The cost is \$299 per person (double occupancy) for four days and three nights.

If you don't mind, or if you relish the prospect of driving 350 miles, you might want to consider going on your own to Montreal and then detouring to quaint Quebec. In both cities, the French cuisine and the French spoken on the street contribute to the feeling that you have crossed the ocean, rather than just meandered for several hours through beautiful New York, Vermont, or even Maine en route.

Several of the hotels and restaurants in Quebec City feature regional cui-

## Travel

sine, representing Quebec's culture, regional products, food customs, and the lifestyles of the people growing and preparing the meals: Hotels des Gouverneurs Sainte-Foy, Le Croquemouche (Hilton Quebec), Le Melrose, and Manoir du Lac Delage.

A number of hotels in Montreal and Quebec offer attractive room rates, some even with special deals for "seniors." A striking example is Quebec's Le Chateau Champlain, a Canadian Pacific resort that offers senior citizens 60 percent off the standard room rate of \$178 (Canadian) from Sunday to Thursday nights.

Another reasonable hotel, this one in Montreal, is the Hotel Chateau Napoleon, which bills itself as "the least expensive luxury hotel in downtown Montreal." Cost is \$57.50 for a room with a queen-size bed (\$6 for each additional person).

### JAMAICA

For a total change of atmosphere, in a country where the speech sounds vaguely British but with a definite island twang, there's Jamaica, the beautiful Caribbean island, or more specifically, Ciboney, a luxury resort at Ochos Rios. A haven of privacy, personal care and pamper-

ing, the 45-acre resort has 300 villa suites and Great House Rooms. Each villa has its own swimming pool and an attendant who will prepare and serve meals to provide a private dining experience. Or you can wander into any of a variety of restaurants serving continental and Jamaican cui-

continued on page 20





## Travel

*continued from page 19*

sine, like curried goat or jerk chicken.

Through Dec. 20, opening-special rates for two people range from \$1,125 for four days and three nights in a mountain-view studio suite or club house room (in the Great House) to \$4,760 for eight days and seven nights in a private honeymoon villa (with pool and Jacuzzi). There are also special rates for four or six persons in two- or three-bedroom suites. Rates are all-inclusive, except for phone calls, gift shop purchases and other items of a personal nature.

### ARIZONA

Far from the ocean and the tropic, but with a charm all its own is Arizona, where, in addition to the

Grand Canyon (reason enough for a trip), there are resorts in Phoenix, Sedona or Scottsdale that warrant your attention. Each is different in feeling.

Sedona, a charming art colony, has the fabulous L'Auberge de Sedona, a bit of France in the desert. Among its chief attractions is its outstanding dining room. Rooms cost \$220 and the villas are \$325.

Scottsdale is like one giant country club with emphasis on tennis, golf, and the great outdoors. This is a good base for traveling to the Grand Canyon, just four hours away — with an overnight in the park, if possible. Many of the places here offer discounts for senior citizens (over 62 or 65 and up; everybody has a

different definition). On the low end, Scottsdale's Camelback Inn, a Marriott property noted for golf and tennis, asks \$79 to \$130 for a standard room.

The Arizona Biltmore is in Phoenix, a big city on the desert with beautiful suburbs. It's a deluxe hotel also known for its golf and tennis facilities. Standards rooms range from \$90 to \$130.

The best times to visit Arizona are in spring and fall; in winter, it gets cold at night.

### CALIFORNIA

In the neighboring, golden state of California, there are myriad attractions. Often, the decision about where to start to see them boils down to San Francisco or Los Angeles. But for those people who want to combine a bit of both with a look at attractions in between, there are the California Parlor Car Tours. Operating under that name since 1924, the company notes that it is "almost a tradition." While the name suggests travel by train, it actually takes place on air-conditioned coaches with reclining seats and restrooms.

Depending on your choice of destinations and the number of stops, you

*continued on page 31*

