

THE BAG

Kipling's new luggage range includes the medium-sized "Monkey Mania" Darcey case. There's also a large russet-red Darcey M case. Both are spinners and weigh less than 3.5kg; from £130 (kipling.com).



THE TRIP

A new 15-day trip on the Golden Eagle Danube Express departs Budapest next October for Iran. It's the first European train tour allowed in the country. It will also visit Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey (mircorp.com).

THE WEBSITE

Google has launched Trekker, an enhanced version of Street View that transports you to Mount Everest, the 80th floor of the Burj Khalifa, the Grand Canyon, Britain's waterways and more (google.co.uk).

B&B AND BEYOND CASA TURQUESA, BRAZIL

Blue is the colour, glamour is the game

The lively town of Paraty is full of charming pousadas, but head to the harbour to find its best, says **Holly Williams**

On the coast between Sao Paulo and Rio lies the picture-book pretty Paraty, its traffic-free cobbled streets and historic squares fringed by colonial buildings, white-washed with colourfully painted wooden roofs and shutters; palm trees sway above jaunty, bright little boats, bobbing on the bay. The small town's Portuguese architecture is well preserved and deeply charming.

It can get lively too, when Flip, a major international literary festival, descends on the town in July (flip.org.br). Paraty also hosts music, photography and even cachaça festivals. All these have raised its profile, and Paraty is stuffed with pousadas – the local version of a B&B – of varying quality. Casa Turquesa stands as one of the very best.

Situated in the historic quarter, right next to the harbour, it's a calm haven, combining buckets of rustic charm with slick modern touches. The owner renovated the building from a tumble-down wreck, while retaining fragments of chunky old stone walls. Out by the pool and patio, these are covered in lush foliage – ferns and orchids sprout, banana and orange trees grow and palms wave softly above.

Guests change into Casa Turquesa-branded Havaianas flip-flops on arrival, bestowing a chilled-out vibe



from the moment you step through the door – aided by the house cocktail (blue curaçao, cachaça and lime) that's delivered straight to your hand.

THE BED

The cocktail introduces the guest's turquois theme, which is seen in everything from the painted shutters to the stationery. Elsewhere, cool white curtains drape over the thick soft beds; sun-loungers lie temptingly around the pool and a chic library area housing yet more sofas ensures there are places to stretch out and relax everywhere you look.

The nine rooms are all spacious, classy and cool: polished wooden floors and beamed ceilings; brass light fittings and exposed brickwork. Showers are blissfully powerful and hot. Prettily retro-packaged toilet-ries are provided.

Other thoughtful details include beach towels and Wellington boots, for whatever the weather. There are

FLAG IT UP

The exterior of Casa Turquesa, main; a bedroom, top right; and one of Paraty's charming cobbled streets

also televisions in the rooms and free Wi-Fi.

THE BREAKFAST

A fruit salad in a Martini glass showcases some of Brazil's fine fruits, accompanied by freshly squeezed orange juice and warm, caramelised bananas. Tea or coffee are served with breads, pastries and pao de queijo – cheesy dough balls, very Brazilian and very moreish. Cheeses and meats are on offer too, and they'll make eggs or a toasted sandwich for you, if you can find room. Whatever happens, make sure you squeeze in the tasty little Portuguese coconut queijadas (sponge cakes).

THE HOSTS

Tete Etrusco has lived in this quiet area of Paraty for 20 years, but only opened Casa Turquesa in 2008, after renovating the buildings that had partially burnt down in a fire 40 years ago. Tete planned to live in the top room,



as a little studio attic flat. "When I started, I only had two cats. By the time I finished, I also had two dogs – and a husband!" So, she explains, they now live in the adjacent house.

THE WEEKEND

If you're there for the festivals, time soon fills up, but there are plenty of other attractions too. Paraty's beach is nice for a stroll or sunbathe. For swimming, it's better to get a bus or a taxi (about R\$100/£27) to the beautiful beach of Trindade. Or join a schooner tour (from around R\$30/£8) for a spot of island hopping and snorkelling. Stroll around Paraty's cobbled streets, looking in at pretty old churches and shopping for handicrafts, then catch a performance at the little puppet theatre – Teatro de Bonecos (paraty.com.br).

THE PIT STOP

Casa do Fogo (00 55 24 3371 3163;

casadofogo.com.br) is a fun spot for dinner. You can watch everything go up in flames as chefs flambé vegetables, seafood and meat in slugs of cachaça. The results are tasty stir-fries, best served with a caipirinha or two. Mains cost from R\$30 (€8) and are soundtrack by chilled renditions of 1960s Brazilian classics.

Punto Divino (00 55 24 3371 1348; puntodivino.com) offers more old-world-and-tropical-vegetation styling. It's a lively appealing place with a wide selection of Italian-influenced dishes. Service and diners are relaxed. You can while away the evening in the courtyard over a bottle of wine and live traditional music. Mains from R\$25 (€7).

THE ESSENTIALS

Casa Turquesa, Rua Doutor Pereira, 50 Centro Historico, Paraty, Brazil (00 55 24 3371 1037; casaturquesa.com.br). Doubles start at R\$1,265 (€336), including breakfast.

GREAT GETAWAYS

LEAF PEEPING

As summer draws to a close, Bon Voyage is looking to the new season. The company has some autumnal trips to New England, aimed at leaf peepers. As an example: a 10-night fly-drive starting in Boston and moving on to the Berkshire Hills, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine, costs £1,595pp with B&B in quaint inns, car hire and Delta flights from Heathrow, departing daily from 15 September to 15 October (bon-voyage.co.uk).

ME TIME

The Healthy Holiday Company has a week at the Longevity Wellness Resort in Portugal for €995pp in September. The hotel, located outside the spa town of Caldas de Monchique, offers treatments and tranquility in the rural Algarve. The package includes breakfast and the "Longevity Vitality Plan" of daily activities, plus transfers and easyJet flights from Gatwick to Faro (bit.ly/LongHol).

SPANISH STROLL

HF Holidays has a week's walking in the wilds of Andalusia for £749pp. The trip takes in the Sierra de Grazalema Natural Park, the dramatic hilltop town of Ronda and the pueblos blancos of Zahara de la Sierra. Starting either on 28 September or 12 October, the holiday includes guides, Monarch flights from Gatwick to Malaga, transfers and half-board at Hotel Puerta de la Villa (hfholidays.co.uk).

SUNNY CHRISTMAS

Kuoni has released some winter-sun deals for the Christmas period. They include a five-night flit to Cape Town, priced at £1,595pp, with Emirates flights from Gatwick via Dubai on 23 December and B&B at the four-star Southern Sun The Cullinan. Quote AS917 when booking (kuoni.co.uk).

SOMETHING TO DECLARE



BUILDING BLOCKS
Le Corbusier's La Cité Radieuse in Marseille tested the writer's Francophile tendencies

The impossible dream of French perfection

Stephen Bayley



A recent cartoon in *The New Yorker* showed a couple glumly facing each other across a kitchen table and the caption read: "Exactly when did all the things you love about me become all the things you hate about me?" I am beginning to think that way about France. The idea of France was always a dream. And in dreams begin responsibilities and, it turns out, disappointments too.

A few days in Provence, in what the French so didactically declare "one of the prettiest villages in France", has finally taught me that trying to recapture my Gallic dreamworld is like trying to embrace fog. In this hilltop village, there is a fine collection of medieval buildings and each one has been pitilessly molested by either the tourist authorities or middle-brow junk art galleries.

I turned into a dark chapel for respite only to find it booming with sub-adult HD video about an "experience" on offer. Oily gap-year French youths, escaping the imminent reality of real-world unemployment, walked around officially dressed as troubadours (with trainers).

Nearby was something impressive, the La Coste wine estate where Irish entrepreneur Paddy "Claridge's" McKillen has created a hugely ambitious sculpture park. By the time it is finished, with the golf course and hotel, it will be a World of Adventures with vines.

So we went on to Marseille, the 2013 European Capital of Culture, to see the new MUCEM (the politically correct and wearily inconclusive Museum of the Civilisation of

Europe and the Mediterranean), perhaps France's very last grand projet. Local architect Rudy Riccotti says he wants to "demuseumify museums". Not, if you ask me, a felicitous expression that promises calm and clarity. Still, if you want to find an architectural demonstration of what France has become, visit the Fort Saint-Jean complex on the Vieux-Port.

I kept on trying to translate "mink coat and no knickers" as we sweated and jostled through vapid exhibits at MUCEM, trivialised by big swinging architectural rhetoric. And if "culture" means vast queues of listless tourists gazing at plasma screens, personally I want none of it. At least there were no troubadours.

We stayed in Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse which has a number of apartments available for brief stays. I am no doctrinaire opponent of strict-observance Modernism, far from it, but here was another test of French dream vs French reality.

The cheerful "vertical garden city" of the propaganda has a haunted and sinister quality. Not sinister in the sense that a *demandeur d'emploi* troubadour might knife you in a dark corridor, but more that it is solid with a sense of failure. It strikes me as significant that the Toulouse riots of 2005 began in a *banlieue* designed by pupils of Le Corbusier. Fact: they don't have riots in Le Panier, the crumbly dense old quarter of Marseille.

I reflected on this as we left the city to meet friends for lunch in Peter Mayle country near Ménerbes. Marseille is a difficult place not, I think, at ease with itself. Sweaty and desolate in turns, sullen and grumbly, despite the City of Culture wash 'n' brush-up.

Then we hit the D99 between Saint-Rémy and Cavailon with its lovely *arbres* and the dream came rushing back.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

The Con Dios Yacht, Gibraltar

Seven nights from £3549



Experience the best Gibraltar has to offer from a private mooring in the marina. The Con Dios is close to all the attractions and from the sun deck there are spectacular views of the rock itself, where you can relax and watch the world go by. Gibraltar is also a great place to explore Andalusian Spain, with Cadiz, Marbella, Ronda and Seville all within travelling distance. Day trips to Morocco can be arranged from here and Gibraltar's own history clings to the rocks in the form of the infamous resident Barbary apes.

Prices below are based on flights from London Gatwick. Other airports can be arranged at a supplement.

The price includes:

- Return flights from Gatwick
- 20kg luggage allowance

Travelling	Stateroom	Twin (Smaller)
July 2013	£529	£469
August 2013	£579	£529
September 2013	£499	£449
October 2013	£439	£389
November 2013	£419	£369
December 2013	£409	£359

To book or to browse hundreds of other travel offers visit: independent.myreaderoffers.com
Booking Line: 0844 472 5543

Prices shown are subject to availability, correct at time of going to press, from and per person, based on two sharing. The above holidays are booked by The Cruise Machine Ltd TA Varnes Holidays (03824), acting as an agent for the TTA under ATOL number 10200 (TTA's Ltd), a company independent of Independent Travel Ltd. Where you respond to offers we may use your information to contact you with offers/services we believe will be of interest. Please give your mobile or email details if you wish to receive offers by text or email. We will not give your data to other companies without your permission, please let us know if you are happy for us to do so. 0844 calls charged at 50p from BT landlines, other networks may vary.

FOOD MILES ANDY LYNES

Let top chefs guide you to Europe's culinary delights

If you're thinking about taking a culinary-focused European autumn break, searching out the gastronomic treasures of France or Italy will no doubt spring to mind. But following in the footsteps of some of Europe's top chefs can help you unearth less obvious destinations.

● **Rick Stein** recently made a TV pilgrimage to his ancestral homeland of Germany to explore the country's

cuisine. Stay at the Maritim Hotel (00 49 69 75780; maritim.com) in Frankfurt, where Stein visited the Kleinmarkthalle indoor market and sampled the local dish of Grüne Sosse (green sauce) at Café Liebfrauenberg (00 49 69 287380; cafe-liebfrauenberg-frankfurt.de) between 3-6 October, and a half-board gourmet break is €335pp (€286). Full details at: bit.ly/EatFrankfurt.



Chef's table: Casa Marcelo in Santiago de Compostela

● In his book *Spanish Flavours*, London-based Spanish chef and restaurateur José Pizarro (josepizarro.com) describes the food of Galicia in north-western Spain as "culinary heaven". easyJet (0843 104 5000; easyjet.com) recently launched a new service from Gatwick to the region's capital, Santiago de Compostela. Enjoy local produce given a refined twist by pioneering chef Marcelo Tejedor at the Michelin-starred Casa Marcelo (00 34 981 558 580; casamarcelo.net).

● **Great British Bake Off** judge Paul Hollywood trained and worked at Anabelle hotel in Cyprus (00 357

26 888 000; annabelle.com.cy). From September it will offer classes where guests can learn how to bake traditional Cypriot breads such as baskies (a cheese bread with lamb, cheese, raisins and spices) and Tsourekis, a sweet Easter bread; €90pp for two days.

● **Shaun Hill**, chef/proprietor of Michelin-starred The Walnut Tree Inn, Abergavenny (thewalnuttreeinn.com) made a "spectacularly good" discovery on a recent trip to Slovenia. "Hisa Franko in Kobard is a rustic spot, way off the beaten track, where I ate a brilliant meal for reasonable money," says Hill (00 386 5 389 4120; hisafranko.com). "It's run by a couple,

with Ana running the ultra modern kitchen and husband Valter, who keeps an enormous cellar of Slovenian wine." Expect seasonal dishes that include the wild herbs, flowers and mushrooms that grow near the restaurant and guest house.

● Two Michelin-starred pub chef Tom Kerridge of The Hand and Flowers in Marlow (thehandandflowers.co.uk), recommends Stockholm. "I ate some of the most incredible food I've ever come across at Restaurant Franzen. Björn Franzen is a premier-league chef who is on his way to super stardom" (00 46 8 20 85 80; restaurantfranzen.com).