

# THE TRAVEL TATTLER

TRAVEL NEWS, TIPS, AND TIDBITS

Q2 2019



THAILAND • COTSWOLDS • TENNESSEE • IRELAND • CARIBBEAN • COSTA RICA & PANAMA

**HUFFMAN TRAVEL**  
CHICAGO • DAYTON

**“Wherever you go becomes part of you somehow.”**

*—Indian Novelist Anita Desai*

Last February, as I was returning home from India, I started reliving my fabulous trip, trying to define exactly what made this particular trip so impactful. Of course I loved the majestic palaces, awe-inspiring scenery, and flavorful cuisine, but I quickly realized it is the people I interacted with while in India who truly changed my perception of the country. Beautiful children playing with cardboard on the streets and laughing with a laugh so pure, the genuine desire to please from the bellmen to the butlers (yet another reason to love travel in India!), and our knowledgeable, friendly guides whose sole objective is to share their love of their country with visitors. India often overwhelms its visitors' five senses, but it was the people I met along the way that made my experience incredible.

In an age where we are constantly checking emails, liking beautiful images, and searching for the perfect ‘Instagrammable moment,’ travel enables us to take a step away from technology and interact on a purely human level with the people around us... human connection is still hard to beat.

One of the greatest joys I feel is when a client



returns from a trip excited to tell us how they connected with their guide, how they created a bond with a restaurant owner, or how they developed a better understanding – and respect – for a foreign culture.

This connection, to us, is the intangible luxury we try to weave into the trips we plan by incorporating our favorite spots, beloved guides, and candid tips. That's how we want to nurture our relationship with you. It starts right here, by sharing the personal stories of human connections that follow.

#TraveltoLive

*by* **Shawna Huffman Owen**

President & CEO, Huffman Travel  
shawna@huffmantravel.com



PLEASE SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE TO **THE TRAVEL TATTLER**





## INTO THE WILD IN THAILAND

**O**n my last trip to Thailand, I had the joy of experiencing urban vibrancy, lush jungle, and island life. After a quick stop in bustling Bangkok, I made my way north toward Chiang Mai. Despite being a large city, it feels very local and authentic; Chiang Mai is celebrated for its delicious street food and colorful night markets. The nearby Patara Elephant Farm is a must do for all animal lovers, and especially when traveling with family. Many elephants are still abused across Southeast Asia, which makes it rewarding to

visit Patara and see the rescued elephants living out their lives in total peace and safety. Getting up-close to the elephants, feeding them, learning about how to determine their health, and bathing them in a clear stream truly is life changing!

Next, my journey took me to the Golden Triangle and Chiang Rai. In this northernmost part of the country, you can explore Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand all in one day! The local Four Seasons Tented Camp is one of the most unique properties I've





“My fondest memory of Thailand is the people.”

*continued from page 3*

ever visited. I recommend having a cocktail on the outdoor deck overlooking the river, Myanmar, and Laos.

No trip to Thailand is complete without a stop at the beach. After leaving the jungle, I traveled to the island of Phuket. While very developed, there is a plethora of fantastic resorts that make it the perfect place to relax and enjoy the tropical weather. If you're in search of a more authentic experience, continue to Phi Phi Island (formerly a James Bond filming location). The dramatic landscape

makes for some gorgeous photos! Another interesting stop is the tiny Muslim fishing village of Ko Panyi.

Aside from all the above, my fondest memory of Thailand is the people. They are such kind, gentle, and happy human beings – and the true soul of Thailand. 🌿



*by* Angela Schoenhard

**Luxury Travel Advisor  
& Director of Business Operations**  
angela@huffmantravel.com



# BRITISH LIFESTYLE IN THE COTSWOLDS

## ■ Where to stay in Bath

The Gainsborough Hotel, a chic property ideally located a couple of minutes away from the Roman baths. This is the only hotel in the city to capitalize on the curative perks of the natural thermal water.

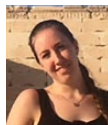
## ■ Favorite shop in Tetbury

Highgrove shop, which sells an array of products exclusively made for Prince Charles' Highgrove estate located close by. The latter can be visited when the Prince is not on property. Great for people who enjoy gardening as much as Prince Charles!

## ■ Favorite bakery in Stow-on-the-Wold

Le Pâtissier Anglais, owned by a student of Gordon Ramsay. Celebrities and affluent shoppers alike come to see him and buy his delicious creations. Fear not! Your privacy is protected: The pâtissier never reveals his regulars.

by  
**Chantal  
Isada**



**Luxury Travel Advisor**  
[chantal@huffmantravel.com](mailto:chantal@huffmantravel.com)



No matter which part of the Cotswolds you visit, you're in for a treat! The Cotswolds boast peaceful countryside landscapes and historic villages, each with its own charm and take on England.

For couples seeking a relaxing experience in the English countryside, I suggest spending a weekend in the city of Bath, a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Avon Valley, known for its Roman-built baths. An ideal destination for avid cyclists and walkers, stroll or bike past various little shops while admiring the Georgian architecture, and enjoy a hike up in Solsbury Hill for outstanding views of the city and endless green pastures.

The nearby town of Tetbury

is the perfect destination for antique shoppers looking for unique and local items to bring back home. Wander through the many independent, high-end boutiques known for selling high-quality wool products – one of the specialties of the area.

Foodies will find their haven in Stow-on-the-Wold, a little market village offering an extensive variety of local food shops. Enjoy a cup of tea at Huffkins Stow, known for its tearoom and delicious bakery products. Many visitors choose to bring a selection of goodies home to re-create the quintessential afternoon tea experience for family and friends. 🍵





## A COUPLES RETREAT



*by* **Elizabeth O'Connor Cole**  
Mom of Four  
Founder, Salveo Lifestyle

### **W**hat's most important when choosing a destination for a couples retreat?

Finding a resort that has both female and male energy. That may sound a little new age, but it's true! Blackberry Mountain (BBM) is rustic and chic at the same time, which is a difficult combination to pull off, and they do it beautifully.

### **W**hat makes BBM different from acclaimed sister property, Blackberry Farm (BBF)?

At BBM, you are up in the mountains; BBF is nestled down in the valley. This drastically different topography and setting really set the tone. At BBF, you want to curl up by the fire, spend the afternoon in a rocking chair with a good book, take a cooking class, and linger for hours over dinner in the barn. At BBM, however, you genuinely feel called to get out in nature and take a hike, go mountain biking on the many trails, or attend one of the

fantastic exercise classes. Finally, the food at BBM is terrific but not the central focus as it is at the Farm. It is more of an amazing fuel for you to enjoy all the activities. Believe me, they have nailed the delicious and nutritious cuisine!

### **W**hat was your favorite element of this weekend getaway?

I love so many things about the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, starting with how easy it is to get there from Chicago! An hour-and-half flight followed by a 20-minute drive, and you are on the hiking trails before lunch! The accommodations are fabulous and so chic. But for me, it is the staff and the incredible service that set Blackberry Farm & Mountain apart. They are here to ensure that you enjoy the most memorable getaway and the word "no" isn't part of their vocabulary. And as I can attest, that's what makes you come back time and time again. It feels a little like home! 🌿

# Our Advisors

## WHAT'S ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?



Get to know the Huffman Travel Advisors a bit better by learning what places they want to visit most...



### SANDI

#### ● Mexico City

As an avid lover of food and wine, Mexico City has long been on my travel list. It's just over 4 hours by plane from Chicago and boasts two restaurants featured in the top 15 in the world, a notable art scene, and an excellent value for your money compared to major international cities.

#### ● Harbour Island

This gem in the Bahamas is a place I have always wanted to visit! A charming island surrounded by beautiful turquoise water and pink sand beaches, and where golf carts are used as the preferred method of transportation!

#### ● Israel

What a land of contrasts! I am looking forward to the remarkable history and culture in Jerusalem, followed by the thriving nightlife scene in Tel Aviv. As a bonus, Israel is a year-round destination!



### JEFF

#### ● African Safari

Animals are a true passion of mine. It has always been my dream to experience them up-close in their natural habitats, float above the Serengeti in a hot air balloon, engage in local tribal experiences, and trek the mountains to see elusive gorillas. I tell my clients, "it will change your life," and look forward to the day it changes mine.

#### ● Antarctica

I've always been drawn to the allure of Antarctica and its dramatic glaciers. I look forward to spending my days learning about the continent and taking in the abundance of wildlife — especially the emperor penguins and whales. A complete spectrum of wildlife that you'll see nowhere else in the world.

#### ● Greek Islands

Since studying mythology in school, I've been fascinated by Greece. From charming ports of call to amazing local cuisine, vibrant nightlife, and untouched coastal mountains surrounded by the crystal-clear waters of the Aegean Sea... the Greek Islands are calling my name!



### LISA

#### ● Italy

There are so many areas of this beautiful country I want to explore. My first trip is sure to include the colorful Amalfi coast, sunny Capri, and Tuscany. I'll be hiking, wine- and olive oil-tasting, taking cooking classes, island hopping, and getting to know the locals. Viva Italia! Stay tuned!

#### ● Alaska

My first experience in Alaska will be on a small cruise vessel. I long for an up-close, personal experience. I see myself glacier-walking, enjoying the sea life in a kayak, and embarking on a back-country wildlife excursion to see bears. I'll love the salmon bakes, local crafts, and the authentic feel of the small villages along the way.

#### ● Peru

Because I am an outdoorsy person, Peru has always been on my bucket list. I know I'll fall in love with the natural beauty of the mountains and valleys, as well as the Peruvian culture. After spending a few days in the Sacred Valley, I want to take the train from Cusco to Machu Picchu and hike the Incan ruins.





### **SHEEN FALLS LODGE IS AS UNIQUE AS IRELAND ITSELF**

A member of Relais & Chateaux, Sheen Falls Lodge is a stunning countryside estate nestled on the breathtaking coastline of County Kerry. Ideally located for touring the Ring of Kerry, The Beara Peninsula, and Dingle Peninsula, we love that the hotel is within walking distance of the quaint town of Kenmare. If walking is not your forte, we'd be more than happy to request the 1936 Vintage Buick for you! In between touring, enjoy a variety of estate activities, including 15 miles of salmon fishing, horse riding, clay pigeon shooting, falconry, tennis, use of the hotel bicycles, etc. Make sure to leave time for the Easanna Spa! Finally, indulge in the finest food and wine at The Falls restaurant before retiring to your elegant and spacious accommodation to recharge your batteries.

### **RELAXATION TAKES MANY FORMS ABOARD SILVERSEA**

There is nothing like a Caribbean cruise to make your thoughts drift to balmy breezes and swaying palms. We love to set sail for the sun with Silversea, an ultra-luxury cruise line that delivers small-ship experiences with big-ship amenities. In fact, small-ship cruising is our favorite way to explore the authentic beauty of Cuba - the island time forgot. Some of our other favorite itineraries include lazy days in the Grenadines, rafting in Dominica, and hiking the Mayan ruins in Mexico. After a long day in the sun, there's nothing better than returning to the comfort of your suite, with butler service of course!



### **UNRIVALED ACCESS TO NATURE WITH UNCRUISE**

If you're seeking up-close and personal adventure, we have no doubt UnCruise offers you the perfect choice! Hike through the Osa Conservation Area and Curu National Wildlife Refuge, keeping an eye out for everything from crocodiles to caimans, tree frogs to anteaters. You won't believe your guides' talent for spotting wildlife! Kayak through the mangrove canals of Coiba National Park, then snorkel in Granito de Oro islet before enjoying a classic beach party on the warm, white sand... Skiff past dolphins doing acrobatic leaps, then watch the night lights as you transit the Panama Canal aboard your small ship. Paradise is all around!