



IRIS SANDERSON JONES

An ancient-looking tower at El Morro is a colorful and historic attraction to visit in Puerto Rico.

## Warm breezes, cool rum in Puerto Rico

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Jogged down the beach every morning, San Juan boasts some of the finest gourmet restaurants in the United States and the Caribbean.

For fine dining, El San Juan Hotel and Casino has several exquisite restaurants including La Verandah. I had to try Peter Ivanovich's (an internationally acclaimed chef) Puerto Rican cuisine, peach and veal joint stuffed with a mousse of yucca and a sauce of pistachio andaji dulce. And for dessert, I indulged in his original Pina Colada ice cream with Don Q white rum.

Then there was Los Faisanes, a chic restaurant in Condado, with flawless pheasant and seafood cuisine.

Ask Lucky Luciano, Los Faisanes' bartender, to stir up a "Hi Mamee" drink made with exotic mamee apples and dark rum, and tell him, "Salud from Detroit."

I stayed at the elegant El San Juan Hotel & Casino, but if you're not a resort traveler, Puerto Rico has accommodations for a quieter taste with paradises, noted for their home atmosphere and good food. Each of the 15 paradises in Puerto Rico are nestled in a historic building or a suite of scenic beauty. Prices are reasonable and range from \$35 to \$76 per night. For a listing call (800) 443-0266.

El Convento in Old San Juan was built in the 17th Century and served as a convent for the Carmelite nuns until 1903. Today, the old building has been renovated into a fascinating hotel with some of its simple, delicate rooms offering the most breathtaking views of the bay. El Convento rooms begin at \$150 per night. Call El Convento at (800)468-2779.

Aside from great shops and restaurants, the Old San Juan historic district gave me the most distinct taste of the island's culture with Spanish colonial architecture, narrow cobblestone streets and wrought iron balconies.

El Morro in Old San Juan is perhaps the most visited site by travelers. This Spanish fort was built in the mid-1500s to protect settlers from an invasion by the English. The fort sits along the San Juan harbor and is structured to slight bay intruders from miles away.

Traveling is easy to Puerto Rico. As a commonwealth, the U.S. dollar is the currency and there are no customs or entry requirements.

Pick up a Que Pasa, the official visitors guide to Puerto Rico, when you arrive on the island, or write to Que Pasa, Box 4435, Old San Juan Station, San Juan Puerto Rico. For more information on Puerto Rico, contact the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, 575 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017, or call (800) 223-6530.

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Utah (Also in Snowbird, Alta, Park City, Deer Valley, Brighton, Sundance, Solitude and more.)  
 • Feb. 14-18 (\$580 per person) and Feb. 18-23 (\$760 per person), "A Taste of Colorado" (Copper, Keystone, Aspen, Breckenridge, Vail, Loveland).  
 • March 30-Apr. 6 (\$650 per person), Spring Break in Aspen, Colo.

For further details on these ski trips or information on other upcoming recreational trips through the Traveling Teachers of Detroit, call Bonnie Linklater (313) 652-4393 or Sam Wolfe (313) 661-0575.

### Going South

Tennessee is hosting a wide variety of special events, unusual exhibits, spectacular displays, historic home tours, and Christmas celebrations this year. In Nashville, visit the Opryland Hotel for country music celebrations, or take the kids to hear holiday stories read by well-known entertainers. In Pigeon Forge, celebrate a "Smoky Mountain Christmas" at Dollywood Fridays, Satur-

days and Sundays only through Dec. 18, and don't miss the "Smoky Mountain Winterfest" through Feb. 23. Call Tennessee Dept. of Tourism Development, (615) 741-7994.

Celebrate the holidays "Southern style" by attending the Savannah, Ga., 16th Annual Holiday Tour of Homes, sponsored by The Downtown Neighborhood Association. The doors of Savannah's lovely homes will be open Saturday, Dec. 15, from 1 to 4 p.m. and again from 5 to 7 p.m. for the "candlelight tour," and Sunday, Dec. 16 from 1 to 4 p.m. Cost is \$12 per person, \$10 for groups of 15 or more. Call toll-free (800) 627-5030.

If your holiday travel includes the

Carolinas, you won't want to miss the Asheville, N.C., "Light Up Your Holidays Festival." Events are scheduled through December 31 and include holiday entertainment the whole family will enjoy. And don't miss "A Grove Park Inn Christmas," through January 1. The celebration features sing-alongs with the Grove Park Inn Chorus, visits with Santa Claus, craft demonstrations, afternoon tea, delicatessen music, walking tours, horse-drawn carriage rides, gingerbread village and a train exhibit. Lavish decorations, including festive theme trees, yards of garland, 1,000 poinsettias and other floral displays will be featured during

the Christmas holiday.

Closer to home in Noblesville, Ind., The Connor Prairie Museum invites you to join it through December 23 for the "Festival of Gingerbread" where gingerbread houses of all shapes and sizes will be displayed, and Dec. 8-23 for "Connor Prairie by Candlelight." Call (317) 776-6000. "Holiday Fest" in Fort Wayne includes a variety of events including concerts by the Philharmonic and performances of the Nutcracker Ballet. Call toll-free (800) 767-7752.

### Hotel special

The Marriott Hotels, Resorts and Suites are offering a \$49 holiday rate of \$49 per room from Dec. 13, 1990 through Jan. 6, 1991 at their 178 domestic U.S. hotels (New Year's Eve not included). Rooms must be reserved 14 days in advance and payment is non-refundable. Children 6 and under eat free. Call toll-free (800) 228-9290.

## Lights add sparkle to holiday fest

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And these are no ordinary displays. They are huge. Some all-time crowd-pleasing favorites include a candy cane wreath glittering with 30-foot red and white candy canes surrounded by a 60-foot green and red holly wreath.

The "Twelve Days of Christmas" display brings to life that famous carol in football-field size, sparkling with more than 28,000 lights. A gold- and 32-foot menorah rises through a blue Star of David, commemorating the Jewish Festival of Lights.

My favorite is the Fantasy Light Tunnel. Eleven arches containing 1,243 white lights and crystal snowflakes capture and contour car headlights when driving through. The effect is what I imagine traveling on the starship Enterprise at warp-seven would be like, a stream of iridescent, odd-shaped rainbows and bursts of white-heavenly light.

To transform winter darkness into a spectacular panorama of lights, a lighting display authority was hired to design the Oglebay effects. To understand the caliber and quality of the effects, the designer's other creations include lighting the Taj Mahal, the Parthenon in Greece and the Great Pyramids.

The Festival of Lights is a community-wide effort. Students at area high schools fabricate the major displays at Oglebay. Thousands of

**In Oglebay Park, in Wheeling, W. Va., more than 900,000 multicolored holiday lights glow from dusk until 11 p.m. through Jan. 30 and on weekends through February.**

working hours are volunteered by students in attaching the support wires and lights. Civic and church groups join in and sponsor theme displays.

Caught up in the holiday spirit, Wheeling residents dress up homes. Friendly competition between neighborhoods provides added viewing pleasure for visitors attending the Festival.

For a unique point of view, try a fly-over tour. A bird's eye perspective of Oglebay's illuminated grounds and displays, complete with dinner, is available from the Anchor Room (304) 394-5537. Their "Dinner & Flights to the Festival of Lights" packages are available through Jan. 30, 1991, at \$35 per person.

Once in Wheeling, there are a number of other things to do and see. The adventure of river travel on the Valley Voyager sternwheeler beckons with excursions ranging from 45 minutes to three hours.

A grander, more romantic age can be conjured up by visiting Wheeling's treasure trove of Victorian homes. Whether a guided tour, an overnight stay at a Victorian bed-and-breakfast or shopping at the two beautifully restored market houses at Centre Market Square, the essence of things Victorian is well-preserved in Wheeling.

Every Saturday night, downhome fun and frivolity rock Wheeling's Capitol Music Hall. Country-music greats perform live at Jamboree U.S.A., the country's second oldest

live country music show.

Wheeling is conveniently located one-hour west of Pittsburgh, Pa. on I-70. In 1989, 3.5 million visitors viewed the combined Oglebay/Wheeling light show. It does become crowded. To help make your visit more enjoyable, consider these helpful hints:

• Allow plenty of time to view Oglebay displays. Traffic can become congested at the Park.

• Choose alternate routes, available from the Wheeling Convention and Visitors Bureau.

• Go during non-peak mid-week nights, except Christmasweek and Thanksgiving.

• When in Wheeling call the fun phone line (304) 233-2709, for the day's events and activities.

• If fighting traffic is not your idea of fun, bus tour operators sponsor trips to the Festival. When you leave the driving to someone else, you can enjoy the beauty of the Festival from the comfort of a well-padded bus seat.

For more information on accommodations and activities, contact your travel agent or the Wheeling Convention and Visitors Bureau, toll-free (800) 628-3097.

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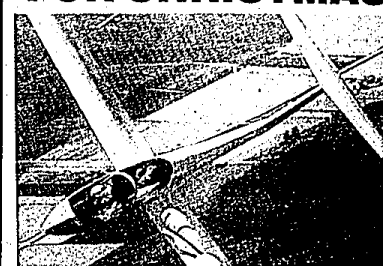
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