

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Celebrating 20-year Rebecca Recommends Anniversary with several team members of the Red Carnation Hotel Collection and Twelve Apostles Hotel & Spa, Cape Town.

Celebrating Milestones

Dear Friends,

Every destination has a story, and this month, we invite you to celebrate milestones, heritage, and the extraordinary moments that make travel unforgettable. Rebecca Recommends celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2024 and we took time to reflect on the incredible honor it is to work with the travel industry's most esteemed people and places.

This month, we are shining a spotlight on places where time-honored traditions meet modern indulgences, where sensational people make all the difference between an ordinary travel experience and a once-in-a-lifetime trip, and where the world has rightly recognized contributions to design and sustainability

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence

that benefit the way we travel. It's a canvas of experiences that inspire connection, celebration, and discovery.

Take a stroll through 150 years of artistry at Paris' iconic Palais Garnier or meander through magnificent gardens at Hartwell House in England. Discover Blanket Bay in New Zealand, where stunning landscapes and legacy converge to craft unforgettable adventures. Marvel at the harmonious blend of sustainability and luxury at London's The Hari, or revel in nature's bounty at South Africa's Babylonstoren. Savor the vibrant flavors and cultures of Türkiye, Ireland, and South Carolina, where local traditions come to life with every bite, every story, and every sight. Be a part of history in the making at a landmark Edinburgh hotel or sip a gin cocktail while listening to a soulful jazz quartet in London's Mayfair neighborhood.

Milestones and memories are the beating heart of meaningful travel experiences. Wherever this coming year takes you and your clients, may your journeys be marked by celebration and wonder that lasts a lifetime.

Fondly,

Rebecca



REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence

Table of Contents

Blanket Bay, Glenorchy, New Zealand - A Legacy of Love, Lodge Life and Luxury	4
Resplendent Ceylon, Sri Lanka - Ceylon Tea Trails: A 20-Year Celebration of Luxury and Legacy	7
Sea Song, Türkiye - Celebrating 25 Years of Luxury Travel in Türkiye	8
Dream Escape, United Kingdom and Ireland - 20 Years in Travel	9
Babylonstoren, Franschhoek Wine Valley, South Africa - A Gathering Spot for Milestones and Memories	10
100 Princes Street, Edinburgh, Scotland - A Year of Extraordinary Moments	11
Hartwell House & Spa, Buckinghamshire, England - Where Guests Become Part of the Story	12
The Hari, London, England - Celebrating Sustainability and Reimagining Luxury	13
Lismore Castle, County Waterford, Ireland - Art, Gardens, Cuisine & History - Read All About It	14
Park Hotel Kenmare, County Kerry, Ireland - Enjoy 700 Years of Irish Whiskey	16
The Chesterfield Mayfair, London, England - Where Tradition Meets Contemporary Elegance	18
Southern Crossings, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji - Celebrating Milestone Partnerships	19
Decouvertes, France - Raise a Glass to 150 Years of Artistry, Elegance, and Unforgettable Performances	21
Meadowood Napa Valley, California - Celebrating the Connection of Cuisine and Culture	22
Dinaric Adventures, Croatia and Beyond - Rebranding and Recentering to Deepen Croatian Connections	24
Beyond Times Square, East Coast, United States - Introducing Charleston and Savannah	25
Dwarika's Hotel and Resort, Nepal - Best Luxury Boutique Hotel Award, The Dwarika's Hotel	26
Catavino Tours, Portugal - Accolades for the Heart of the Catavino Experience	27

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Pauline and Tom Tusher, center, with staff celebrating the 25th anniversary of Blanket Bay Lodge.

[Blanket Bay, Glenorchy, New Zealand](#) - A Legacy of Love, Lodge Life and Luxury

Blanket Bay was extremely proud to celebrate 25 years of timeless luxury with the owners a couple of weeks ago. On that day, they were awarded a mayoral citation for all they had done for the community. Pauline and Tom Tusher hosted a function at the lodge to celebrate the anniversary of its opening — regarded as New Zealand's first “super lodge” in the South — in 1999.

Pauline thought her husband was kidding when he announced he'd bought 55 hectares of overgrown land at Blanket Bay, near Queenstown. The year was 1972, and then Sydney-based Tom Tusher, who'd been launching clothing icon Levi Strauss & Co. in Australia, was in Queenstown with the man he'd hired to set up a New Zealand operation.

The man was asking a local real estate agent about Queenstown, and Tom, tagging along, asked her if there was a piece of land he could tuck away for 25 years.

On a perfect day, the agent took him on “a really heavy-duty vehicle” on the barely formed Glenorchy Road. “When I saw the property and the beauty of the area,” says Tom, “I forgot my common sense and bought it.”

The vendor, who'd waited about five years to flip it, wouldn't let Tom negotiate the price down — probably thinking he was a well-heeled American. Tom says he didn't have the money — \$25,000 — but promised to pay him back in five years.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence

Pauline was shocked because they were going to head back to Levi's head office in San Francisco after Sydney.

"I said, 'Tom, we are never going to go there.'"

Tom, a keen fly fisherman, said he'd build a hut on the lake's edge, and they'd come for a month a year to fish, hike, read, and relax. Until he retired as Levi's president in 1997, he visited his purchase about five times with a picnic lunch.

Visions for the property grew from a hut to a house, to a bed and breakfast to the luxury lodge it is today. Tom says customer research told him people were seeking more adventurous holidays, and Queenstown fit the bill – though many were skeptical about such a remotely located lodge.

He says the sealing of the Glenorchy Road made construction logistics feasible. He adds they were grateful to then mayor Warren Cooper.

"Apparently, there were a couple of councilors that weren't necessarily supportive, so he waited until they went on vacation, put it on the council agenda and he got the approvals."

Tom says he had an American design the lodge, taking inspiration from the log-cabin style in Wyoming and Montana, but with the European alpine look he wanted.

He was indebted to the craftsmanship of the late Ewan Edgerton and his team who completed the build in just 18 months, then took 12 more to add chalets and their own lodge.

Local timber specialist Carl Livingston sourced timbers from bridges, wharves, and industrial buildings in New Zealand and Australia, while local schist rock was also deployed. The Tushers themselves handled much of the interior decoration.

The 1999 flood upset plans for a soft opening and debris was cleared only a day before the first guests arrived on December 16th. One of their first guests was American comedian/actor Robin Williams, who brought his two kids.

Says Tom, "They were the ones that led us to have a no-child policy because they got into our spa, put soap all over the floor, and used it as a skating rink."

Sir Ian McKellen was another early guest, while he was playing Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* movie shoot – he'd have his scripts arrive by fax every Sunday night.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Pauline and Tom Tusher at the 25th-anniversary lodge celebration.

“He came up to us at dinner and drew a sketch of Gandalf. We thanked him and he said, ‘It’s the least I could do because you shared all your numbers with me’ – the back side [of fax paper] had all our financials on it.”

Proving their doubters wrong, Blanket Bay has been a huge success, accommodating 40,000-plus guests and contributing hugely to the Glenorchy and wider Queenstown economy. With 62 staff, after starting with 13, it has become Glenorchy’s biggest employer. About 40 are accommodated in housing the Tuskers have built for staff in Glenorchy – in the original Wyuna Station, which Tom and Queenstown John Darby bought for their high-end Wyuna Preserve subdivision.

“Establishing Blanket Bay has been one of the most satisfying projects we have ever embarked on,” Tom says.

He notes today’s Overseas Investment Office rules would probably have precluded them building on the lake, while being American, they’d have been excluded by New Zealand’s foreign buyer ban.

“We’re permanent residents, and the only reason we haven’t gotten citizenship is taxation.”

These days, they’re here for about three months each summer. As for the future, Tom says “We see this as a heritage property – it’ll be passed on to our older son.”

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[Resplendent Ceylon, Sri Lanka](#) - Ceylon Tea Trails: A 20-Year Celebration of Luxury and Legacy

In 2025, Ceylon Tea Trails marks two decades of pioneering luxury hospitality in Sri Lanka's iconic tea country. As Sri Lanka's first Relais & Châteaux resort, Tea Trails redefined the concept of sustainable luxury, immersing guests in the timeless elegance of restored colonial tea planter bungalows surrounded by rolling tea estates.

This extraordinary journey began in 2005 under the vision of Malik J. Fernando, who sought to showcase Sri Lanka's tea heritage while delivering world-class hospitality. Each of the five bungalows tells a story of its colonial past, blending period furnishings with modern comforts. Guests are invited to embrace the art of tea-making, trek scenic trails, and indulge in gourmet cuisine paired with fine Ceylon teas.

Tea Trails' excellence has been recognized globally. It has been featured on the prestigious Condé Nast Gold List and celebrated for its authentic charm and unparalleled service. The resort also gained international acclaim on BBC's *Amazing Hotels: Life Beyond the Lobby*, where its seamless integration of luxury and sustainability was spotlighted.

As it celebrates 20 years, Ceylon Tea Trails continues to set the benchmark for experiential travel, offering discerning travelers an immersive journey into the soul of Sri Lanka's hill country, steeped in history, culture, and nature.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[Sea Song, Türkiye](#) - Celebrating 25 Years of Luxury Travel in Türkiye

Sea Song Tours was founded in September 2000 by Karen Fedorko Sefer and is now celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2025. The esteemed company has evolved over the years from its beginning and has become one of the most important luxury travel companies in Türkiye.

The road has been long and lots of lessons have been learned with many accomplishments along the way. The team is dedicated to the quality of the services provided, planning amazing trips, executing a seamless experience, and offering exciting fun adventures with excellent guides.

Building the business over time has been a challenge, however, the team is always up to looking at the best of the best for travelers to Türkiye. They always look on the positive side and continue to make dreams come true.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Founders of Dream Escape, Holly Mackie and David Tobin.

[Dream Escape, United Kingdom and Ireland](#) - 20 Years in Travel

2025 is a very exciting year for Dream Escape as they celebrate their 20th anniversary! Dream Escape was founded by David Tobin and Holly Mackie in 2005. Their vision was to create unique and inspirational tailor-made travel experiences for clients from all over the world. Dream Escape has grown significantly and boasts an incredible team of highly experienced Travel Designers, Guest Experience Managers, dedicated in-house guides, and expert curators to handle every aspect of a client's journey from concept to completion.

"With over 175 years of combined expertise, our team is one of the strongest, most experienced in luxury hospitality," says Tobin, Owner and CEO.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Babylonstoren provides exceptional experiences for your clients' milestone celebrations.

[Babylonstoren, Franschhoek Wine Valley, South Africa](#) - A Gathering Spot for Milestones and Memories

Every season marks a milestone in the Babylonstoren garden as it grows, matures, and expands. Situated near Franschhoek in South Africa's Cape Winelands, Babylonstoren is one of the country's oldest working Cape Dutch farms. It has been under its current ownership since 2007 when the gardeners first started preparing the soil and did most of the planting for the formal garden. The working farm and hotel are positioned around a sprawling garden that boasts an array of edible crops, inspired by the original Company's Garden in Cape Town.

Babylonstoren opened its doors to the public in November 2010 and will be celebrating its 15th year in 2025. Within these years, Babylonstoren has added many feathers to its cap. The proudest of these milestones is the community of staff that joined and stayed with the Babylonstoren team since the very beginning.

Apart from celebrating its own milestones, Babylonstoren has become a destination of choice for guests celebrating their special moments - whether milestone anniversaries, honeymoons, or key life events. The Old Cellar, White Studio, and Wheat Barn are sought-after wedding venues. Many newlyweds return to the Farm Hotel and farm-to-fork restaurants to celebrate anniversaries, revisiting the place where their journey began.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[100 Princes Street, Edinburgh, Scotland](#) - A Year of Extraordinary Moments

In April 2025, 100 Princes Street celebrates its first anniversary - and what a remarkable year it has been. Red Carnation's boutique gem in the heart of Edinburgh has already established itself as one of the world's most exceptional hotels, blending Scottish heritage with unparalleled luxury.

From gracing the pages of *TIME* magazine, *Forbes*, and *Condé Nast*, to earning an inaugural Michelin Key by the prestigious *Michelin Guide*, 100 Princes Street has captured the hearts and imagination of travelers worldwide. Within a few short months of opening, it achieved the honor of being accepted into the Virtuoso network - a testament to its world-class service and attention to detail. Every corner of the hotel tells a story, whether it's the hand-painted mural by Croxford & Saunders that spirals up the grand staircase or the custom tartans by Araminta Campbell that pay homage to Scotland's rich craft traditions. Guests can immerse themselves in Edinburgh's artistic and cultural heritage, with the National Gallery of Scotland just moments away.

But it's not just the accolades or design that set 100 Princes Street apart - it's the experiences. Whether sipping a bespoke Scottish gin by the fire or indulging in locally sourced cuisine overlooking Princes Street Gardens and Edinburgh Castle, every detail has been carefully crafted to create memories that last a lifetime.

As we look ahead to 2025, 100 Princes Street promises even more exceptional moments. With limited availability in its intimate collection of only 30 rooms and suites, this is your invitation to book now and be part of history in the making.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Celebrating the founding of the British Royal Meteorological Society at Hartwell House 175 years ago.

[Hartwell House & Spa, Buckinghamshire, England](#) - Where Guests Become Part of the Story

Step into history at Hartwell House, where 175 years ago, the British Royal Meteorological Society was founded. On April 3, 1850, this stately Georgian mansion played host to pioneering minds, including Dr. John Lee, a visionary dedicated to advancing meteorological science. Staying here offers the rare experience of walking in the footsteps of scientific greatness.

Hartwell House's elegant surroundings were once the setting for pivotal discussions that shaped weather science as we know it today. The legacy of that momentous meeting continues to resonate, as the British Royal Meteorological Society remains a global authority on climate and weather research.

More than just a retreat, Hartwell House is a living piece of history, where every corner holds a story waiting to be discovered. From its magnificent architecture to its tranquil gardens, the estate offers a unique blend of timeless charm and historical significance.

At Hartwell House, guests connect with a heritage that inspires curiosity and innovation. Whether celebrating a milestone or reflecting on the achievements of the past, Hartwell House invites all to become part of its remarkable story.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Celebrating a soft refreshment of all guestrooms while successfully committing to sustainability.

[The Hari, London, England](#) - Celebrating Sustainability and Reimagining Luxury

At The Hari, sustainability is the most important commitment, which is why the team would like to celebrate all that it has achieved throughout the year. Thanks to the hotel's incredible Sustainability Manager, Angela Montebello, the team has accomplished a considerable number of milestones, all of which have contributed to The Hari being recognized as the 7th Most Sustainable Hotel in the World, as awarded by TripAdvisor's Travellers' Choice Awards 2024.

In addition to retaining its Silver Certification from EarthCheck, the world's leading sustainable consulting and certification organization for the tourism and hospitality industry, the hotel is also officially renewable. As thanks to a vital partnership with Npower, they have been able to switch electricity to a fully renewable, eco-friendly source, meaning that The Hari has been running off 100% renewable energy since July 2024.

The Hari team would also like to take a moment to celebrate a great design milestone for the hotel - a soft renovation, where all 85 guestrooms were refreshed and reinvigorated while keeping the ongoing commitment to sustainability in mind. This sustainable process emphasized reinventing and reimagining, rather than replacing, which has resulted in an overall sense of calm and warmth when entering The Hari's luxury guestrooms.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Lismore Castle Arts is one of Ireland's prominent modern galleries.

[Lismore Castle, County Waterford, Ireland](#) - Art, Gardens, Cuisine & History - Read All About It

Within the grounds of the extraordinary Lismore Castle, discover Lismore Castle Arts, one of Ireland's prominent modern galleries. A not-for-profit initiative, it was founded in 2005 and is committed to the presentation and promotion of contemporary visual art in Ireland. It hosts exhibitions of international significance alongside a series of smaller exhibitions, projects, and events, as well as a comprehensive learning program. Since opening, the gallery has presented the work of many leading international artists, including Anne Collier, Gerard Byrne, Dorothy Cross, Nancy Holt, Richard Long, Charlotte Prodger, Eva Rothschild, and Ai Weiwei.

Lismore Castle Arts is situated in the historic gardens of Lismore Castle, which includes permanent works by Eilís O'Connell and Franz West. Lismore Castle Arts has a deeply embedded community engagement program, with learning projects such as Artifice, and projects such as A Space for Lismore, which foster long-term projects between artists and communities.

Guests of Lismore Castle can enjoy private tours and exhibition talks with curator Paul McAree.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Lismore Castle Book launch

We've always felt that Lismore deserved a book, and the time has finally come. *Lismore Castle: Food and Flowers from a Historic Irish Garden* will be published in March 2025 and introduces readers to the experience and people of Lismore - Teena, Denis, Colm, and their teams - with essays on the castle's history and interiors, stories of the garden and its produce, and seasonal recipes and cocktails.

Preorder the book [here](#).

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[Park Hotel Kenmare, County Kerry, Ireland](#) - Enjoy 700 Years of Irish Whiskey

Park Hotel Kenmare has one of the largest whiskey collections in Ireland and a team of whiskey experts to talk you through the mystery of this ancient spirit.

The Red Book is a 14th-century manuscript commissioned by Richard de Ledrede, who served as the Bishop of Ossory between 1316 and 1360. The Bishop of Ossory's See was St. Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny City. The Red Book consists of 79 pages of vellum and is written in Latin and Old French. It contains 60 hymns that Ledrede wanted his clergy to sing instead of using the vernacular of the time. It also contains a copy of The Magna Carta.

Significantly, The Red Book also contains an account of distillation. This is the very first written account of distillation in Ireland - as they say in Kilkenny "The First Drop." Also significant is the first mention of Aqua Vitae; these Latin words translate into Uisce Beatha in Irish. When anglicized and mispronounced, Uisce Beatha becomes Whiskey. It is in Kilkenny that this story begins: indeed, the next mention of Aqua vitae will not be until The Annals of Clonmacnoise in 1408. In Scotland, it was not until 1494 that Aqua Vitae was recorded.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Join the expert Whiskey Team, discover its history, and taste whiskeys from around the world.

Park Hotel Kenmare's whiskey collection and whiskey tastings are world-renowned. Join the bar team at Park Hotel Kenmare to explore and discover the world of whiskey from Ireland, Scotland, America, and Japan. The Silver Whiskey Tasting for One is a personal experience to help your clients continue their whiskey journey. The Gold Whiskey Tasting for One brings the connoisseur a little further on their global journey with insights into gems such as the youngest whiskey in the Park Hotel Cabinet with potential.

The beginning of any new whiskey is the "New Make Spirit" distilled and then filled into casks. So far, all the young whiskeys released are excellent, with many fetching up to €800.00 as

collectors scramble to hold history in the making in their hands. Discover what the hotel feels will mature and age wonderfully.

Finally, a platinum whiskey tasting offers insights into the oldest and rarest whiskey in the Park Hotel Kenmare cabinet. Allow the team to share the story of its favorite whiskey.

One of the most favorite and minded whiskeys in the cabinet is a 30-year-old bottle of Midleton 1973. This was released in 2003 as a limited expression: 800 bottles in all. The hotel's bottle is from cask 41421, signed by Barry Crockett. Like all things by the "rule of three," it is very special because it is aged in American Oak (the most common oak species used in whisky maturation is *Quercus alba*) and has spent some time in oloroso sherry butts and port pipes. This adds layers of complexity to the whiskey.

This whiskey is a link to the final days of the old Midleton whiskey distillery. Barry Crockett crafted it from some of the very last Pot Still Whiskeys distilled at Midleton. For whiskey people, this is living the dream.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[The Chesterfield Mayfair, London, England](#) - Where Tradition Meets Contemporary Elegance

Step into The Chesterfield Mayfair, the very first jewel in the crown of the Red Carnation Hotel Collection. Acquired in 1984, this beloved Mayfair institution has been delivering exceptional hospitality under the Tollman family for over 40 years. While much has evolved in that time, one thing remains unchanged - its unwavering commitment to passionate, personalized service that makes every guest feel at home.

Recent years have brought exciting transformations, including a stunning refurbishment of the conservatory and the introduction of Sem's of Mayfair. Named after the celebrated artist Georges Goursat, known as "Sem," this chic bar celebrates his playful illustrations while offering a sophisticated menu of inventive cocktails, irresistible small plates, and unforgettable bar experiences, such as gin, rum, and whiskey tastings. As evening falls, the bar comes alive with live musical performances, from a soulful jazz quartet to a captivating singer and pianist, creating an atmosphere that's as vibrant as it is alluring.

Looking ahead, summer 2025 will see the unveiling of a stylish rooftop bar, promising breathtaking views over the prestigious Mayfair neighborhood. Located just moments from London's finest shopping destinations - Bond Street, Regent Street, and Savile Row - and a short stroll from iconic landmarks like Buckingham Palace, The Royal Academy, and Hyde Park. The Chesterfield Mayfair offers the perfect base for exploring the city's timeless charm and cultural treasures.

Whether you're seeking a serene retreat or a vibrant night out, The Chesterfield Mayfair blends heritage, luxury, and location to deliver an experience as exceptional as its history.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Southern Crossings is proud of its philanthropic partnerships, including Citizens of the Reef. Photo credit - Tourism Australia

Southern Crossings, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji - Celebrating Milestone Partnerships

Founded on the mission to “inspire and enrich by creating extraordinary journeys,” Southern Crossings is dedicated to delivering responsible luxury travel experiences that are as rewarding and restorative for local environments and communities as they are for those who travel with them. They are thrilled, therefore, to be launching into 2025, celebrating a collection of meaningful partnerships that were recently cemented with local philanthropic organizations dedicated to protecting Australia and New Zealand’s precious reefs and rainforests, wildlife, and communities.

Southern Crossings is proudly partnering with:

[ReForest Now](#): restoring Australian rainforests

[Trees that Count](#): planting native trees in New Zealand

[Woven Earth](#): transforming lives and restoring hope for the vulnerable in Auckland

[Science for Wildlife](#): supporting ground-breaking koala research

[Kākāpō Recovery](#): protecting New Zealand’s endangered kakapo parrots

[Citizens of the Reef](#): working to protect Australia’s Great Barrier Reef

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Northland forest in New Zealand. Photo credit - Miles Holden

In addition to providing these organizations with valuable financial and in-kind support for their invaluable work, some of these partnerships also allow privileged access to unique and meaningful local experiences for Southern Crossings travelers: from exclusive koala research or a day experience in the Blue Mountains and privileged access to Iwi lands for the opportunity to spot New Zealand's endangered Kakapo parrots in their natural habitats, to elevated opportunities to cruise the Great Barrier Reef and participate in the Great Reef Census alongside the initiative's visionary founder.

They are incredibly proud to be celebrating these milestone partnerships in 2025.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Enjoy the 150-year celebration of the legendary Palais Garnier.

[Decouvertes, France](#) - Raise a Glass to 150 Years of Artistry, Elegance, and Unforgettable Performances

Paris is set to dazzle as the iconic Palais Garnier celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2025! Since opening its gilded doors on January 5, 1875, this masterpiece of architecture and performance has enchanted visitors with its stunning interiors and rich cultural legacy.



Your travelers may enjoy an upcoming special performance at the Palais Garnier and Opéra which opened its 2025 season with a grand Anniversary Gala on January 24, 2025, in celebration of the Palais Garnier's timeless contribution to the arts.

Decouvertes DMC invites you to immerse your clients in this historic moment. From VIP tickets to personalized luxury experiences in Paris, they'll help you design the perfect trip to celebrate this milestone in style.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Executive Chef Alejandro Ayala celebrates his 39th anniversary at Meadowood in 2025.

[Meadowood Napa Valley, California](#) - Celebrating the Connection of Cuisine and Culture

At Meadowood Napa Valley, people are at the heart of the culture of hospitality, and perhaps no one on the property exemplifies this more than Executive Chef Alejandro “Ale” Ayala. In 2025, Chef Alejandro will mark his 39th year with Meadowood, making him the longest-serving member of the team. Not only does he exhibit the commitment to community that is part of the Meadowood spirit, but his passion for his craft has propelled him into his role today.

Chef’s break into cuisine came early on when, while working in his first role as a dishwasher, one of the Meadowood cooks taught him to make crêpes. One day, the property’s new French executive chef walked into the kitchen to find him carefully preparing a batch. Ayala recalls that the new chef asked, “What’s your job here?” “I’m the dishwasher,” was his response. A week later the chef invited him to work in the kitchen as a prep cook. “I’ve been cooking ever since,” says Ayala. Nurtured by Meadowood’s chefs and eager to broaden his skills, he steadily cultivated his technique, eventually cooking for both intimate and large-scale events catered by the estate. Chef Ale’s career path has undoubtedly been one of dedication and growth.

In addition to overseeing the estate’s overall food program, Chef Ale is at the helm of Forum—the wine-country estate’s central, daily restaurant—and introduces new menus every season conceived around the land, farms, and wines of the region. Paying tribute to the Napa Valley’s rich agricultural heritage,

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence

Forum showcases contemporary California dishes with distinctly Mexican influences, forging a flavorful niche in the culinary landscape of wine country.



Meadowood is honored to have Chef Ale as the leader of its culinary program and to serve as an example and role model. His expertise and record of excellence make him an invaluable member of the team, as he continues to innovate the culinary experiences he brings to members and guests.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Christina Andrews and Samantha Radcliffe of Rebecca Recommends joined Dinaric Adventures' first FAM group.

[Dinaric Adventures, Croatia and Beyond](#) - Rebranding and Recentering to Deepen Croatian Connections

What began as a small agency focused on one-day adventure trips has blossomed into a well-established destination management company, marking a key milestone in Dinaric's journey.

Originally, the company specialized in adrenaline-pumping excursions - canyoning, rafting, kayaking - and these one-day adventures brought joy to countless travelers. However, along the way, the team realized that to better serve its clients, they needed to expand their offerings and deepen their connection with them.

Dinaric Adventures' rebrand is more than just a new logo; it's a reflection of a commitment to creating truly memorable experiences. Today, they provide everything from tailor-made tours to full travel management, including boutique hotel bookings and unique experiences that highlight Croatia's rich culture and history.

In November 2024, Dinaric Adventures organized its first Rebecca Recommends FAM trip, and based on the feedback from the agents, it was very well received. That gives the team a huge boost of confidence to keep moving forward with full energy and enthusiasm. This milestone is not only about growth but also the relationships they've built with their partners. With this new chapter, they're excited to help travelers explore the places they've always dreamed of visiting while continuing to deliver the quality and personal touch that has always defined their service.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Your clients will delight in an exclusive, personalized tour of Charleston, South Carolina.

[Beyond Times Square, East Coast, United States](#) - Introducing Charleston and Savannah

In early 2024, BTSQ expanded its curated travel experiences to include the enchanting cities of Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. These destinations have quickly become favorites among their travelers, offering a delightful mix of history, culture, and Southern hospitality. As 2025 unfolds, the team is excited to reflect on this expansion's success and continue crafting unforgettable journeys. In [Charleston](#), guests can immerse themselves in the city's rich past with the [Charleston History Multiday Experience](#), featuring a poignant walking tour delving into the Civil War and slavery and a visit to historic Middleton Place Plantation. In addition, BTSQ has recently added the [Romantic Getaway to Charleston Multiday Experience](#) with highlights including a day reliving *The Notebook* through tours of its iconic filming locations, a guided market visit with a personal chef who crafts a custom meal, and a romantic sunset cruise.

In [Savannah](#), the [Best of Savannah Multiday Experience](#) showcases the city's charm with highlights like a private tour of the Historic District and visits to famed sites like Bonaventure Cemetery. For those looking to indulge their taste buds, the [Savannah Culinary Multiday Experience](#) includes opportunities to savor the city's unique flavors through an iconic Riverboat Luncheon Cruise complete with a scrumptious Southern buffet, exclusive culinary tours, and a private Lowcountry cooking class with an acclaimed chef.

Each of these experiences is thoughtfully designed to cater to your client's interests, ensuring a personalized and luxurious adventure. They'll explore the captivating stories and hidden gems of Charleston and Savannah – two destinations that embody the magic of the South!

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



[Dwarika's Hotel and Resort, Nepal](#) - Best Luxury Boutique Hotel Award, The Dwarika's Hotel

At the Dwarika's Hotel, every milestone embodies its unwavering commitment to preserving Nepal's rich architectural and cultural heritage while delivering the finest in luxury hospitality. The recent recognition as Best International Luxury Boutique Hotel at the prestigious Travel + Leisure India's Best Awards 2024 is a significant milestone for the hotel. This accolade celebrates the Dwarika's Hotel's iconic Newari architecture and its status as a living museum reflecting its dedication to sustainable practices and restoration efforts over the past 50 years.

Each stay at The Dwarika's Hotel celebrates this milestone, weaving together history and luxury. Guests are invited to immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Nepal's past while enjoying modern comforts. Whether exploring the beautifully preserved Newari architecture, indulging in spiritual experiences, or simply enjoying the serene surroundings, The Dwarika's Hotel offers an unforgettable journey that truly connects guests to the soul of Nepal.

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence



Celebrating Ana Abreu's (third from the left) 9th-year anniversary with Catavino Tours.

[Catavino Tours, Portugal](#) - Accolades for the Heart of the Catavino Experience

This year, Catavino Tours celebrates something truly special — Ana Abreu's 9th anniversary as Tour Director. For nearly a decade, Ana has been the heart and soul of Catavino Tours, and there's no way to fully capture how much she means to the team.

Ana's passion for excellence is unmatched. She pours her heart into every detail, ensuring each experience is extraordinary. But it's not just what she does — it's how she does it. Ana has an incredible ability to make every trip absolutely seamless. Whether a client has lost a passport, a hotel suddenly closes, a flight is missed, or a guide has vanished, she will find a solution at a moment's notice.

The challenges of the past few years tested the Catavino team in ways never thought possible. During the height of the pandemic, when everything felt uncertain and the company seemed on the brink, Ana never gave up. Her grit and belief in what the company could achieve carried them through. She didn't just help Catavino survive — she reminded us why they love what they do.

Catavino wouldn't be where it is today without Ana. The team is deeply proud to have her support you and your clients to have an unforgettable experience in Portugal.