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Tour and Hotel News: Barbie in Montreal; Cooking in Chile

In Transit

By SHIVANI VORA MARCH 9, 2016



A new museum in downtown Montreal, Barbie Expo, claims to be home to the largest permanent exhibit of Barbie dolls in the world.

A BEVY OF BARBIES IN MONTREAL

It's all Barbie, all the time. A new museum in downtown Montreal, [Barbie Expo](#), claims to be home to the largest permanent exhibit of Barbie dolls in the world. There are over 1,000 Barbies on display, and each is a one-of-a-kind creation. Some of the dolls are dressed by famous fashion houses such as Christian Dior, Giorgio Armani and Carolina Herrera, while others are made to model famous movie characters like Sandy from "Grease" as well as real-life personalities like Beyoncé and Elizabeth Taylor. Admission is free.

AT CHILEAN HOTEL, COOKING CLASSICS (AND MAKING CHEESE)

Chilean food is the focus at [Hacienda Hotel Vira Vira](#), an 18-room Relais & Châteaux property in Pucon, a village

on the banks of Lake Villarrica in the Lake District of Chile. More than 90 percent of the products used in the hotel's cuisine are produced or grown on-site, including cheese, meat, eggs and organic vegetables, and now the owner, Michael Paravicini, is expanding his farm-to-table concept by giving guests the chance to participate in preparing the food they enjoy. The hotel recently opened a separate building outfitted with a professional kitchen where the chef Damian Fernandez hosts cooking classes on how to make classic Chilean dishes such as pastel de choclo (a meat and corn pie) and on baking bread using wheat grown near the hotel that guests grind themselves. Guests also learn how to make cheese and yogurt and visit the beehives where Mr. Paravicini teaches them how honey is made. In addition, the hotel offers an excursion, based upon availability, to a Mapuche village where guests can learn about indigenous cuisine and have a traditional lunch. A three-night stay including meals, drinks, excursions, activities and airport transfers starts at \$1,905 a person.

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A JEWELRY DESIGNER OPENS A HOTEL IN JAIPUR

A renowned Indian jewelry designer has gone into the hotel business: Siddharth Kasliwal, the creative director of the Jaipur, India, -based Munnu the Gem Palace, recently opened [28 Kothi](#) in Jaipur's historical district. The French architect Georges Floret built the five-room property; it has a contemporary aesthetic mixed with antique pieces and offers organic vegetarian meals, yoga classes, cultural workshops and Ayurvedic massages. Prices from 4,500 rupees a night.

A SAFARI IN AFRICA WITH ALEXANDER McCALL SMITH

Fans of the mystery series the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency can immerse themselves in the books with a new safari from Belmond with the author, Alexander McCall Smith. Called "Journey to the Heart of Botswana with Alexander McCall Smith," the trip is from Nov. 10 to 16 and includes stays at three of Belmond's lodges in northern Botswana. The six-night itinerary begins at [Belmond Savute Elephant Lodge](#) in Chobe National Park, known for its herds of elephants and lion prides. The [Belmond Khwai River Lodge](#) is next and offers night safaris where guests can spot predators on the hunt and nocturnal birds like the giant-eagle owl. The adventure ends at [Belmond Eagle Island Lodge](#) in the Okavango Delta, a destination featured in Mr. McCall Smith's novel, "The Double Comfort Safari Club" as well as his children's book "Precious and the Mystery of the Missing Lion." Throughout the safari, Mr. McCall Smith will share memories of living in Botswana and chat with guests about the inspiration for his books. Prices from \$7,985 a person. For details or to make a booking, go to [belmondsafaris.com](#).

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