

Learn how to take better photos, ‘time travel’ in Europe and more

TRAVEL By Phil Marty - Chicago Tribune

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Visionary Wild is a company that offers travel experiences to photographers looking to move their work to a higher level. It holds workshops led by professional photographers in picturesque locations around the world. A workshop set for Nov. 5-9 offers a chance to blend photography and wine with the Autumn Color in Wine Country workshop, based in California’s Napa Valley. This workshop combines classroom instruction, image critiques and numerous field trips to shoot photos in vineyards and other scenic areas, taking advantage of the fall colors. Providing mentorship during the session will be Elizabeth Carmel, a fine art photographer who owns two California art galleries with her husband, and Jerry Dodrill, who worked with acclaimed photographer Galen Rowell. In addition to instruction in areas such as composition and exposure control, processing of images in Photoshop and Lightroom will be covered. The workshop, suitable for all skill levels, is priced at \$4,350 per person, which includes single-occupancy lodging and all meals and beverages. <http://tinyurl.com/yb2fvzvh>

Keeping tabs on rewards

Credit-card companies keep upping their travel-reward offerings to lure new customers, but there's more to that story. MagnifyMoney.com, a web site that gives advice on personal financial services, has a new study that shows the average number of points given in introductory offers is slightly higher than 40,000 in 2018 — more than double what was given 10 years ago. While the reward bonuses are on the rise, so are the annual fees charged for many cards. In 2008, the average fee was \$74. Now it's \$120. Hotel-branded cards tend to offer more points than airline-branded, but the redemption value per point tends to be lower. In 2018, the average introductory bonus for hotel cards is 60,000, while airline cards' offers average slightly more than 37,000. Study details are at <http://tinyurl.com/y8ctx38r>.

Time travel

If you think it's about time to start paying more attention to time, then you might like Masters of Time: A Watchmaker's Tour of Switzerland and Germany from Zicasso. This is a nine-day tour that visits Geneva, Montreux, Neuchatel, Bern, Basel and Zurich in Switzerland, as well as the Black Forest region in Germany. Travelers will learn about Switzerland's best luxury watchmakers as well as the world-famous cuckoo clocks made in Germany. You can step inside the famous tower of Bern's astronomical clock, visit Switzerland's oldest watchmaking school, tour the Museum of the International Watch Company and its collection of nearly 250 watches, and view the world's largest cuckoo clock. The trip is totally customizable, including dates, and priced from \$6,299 per person, double occupancy. <http://tinyurl.com/ydh84xve>