

Travel

Changing Calgary

Canadian city is undergoing a remarkable transformation of its skyline and beyond **PG 2**

Underwater museum

Cancun offers works of art below the sea **PG 3**



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CELEBRITY TRAVELERS



How I spent my summer vacation

Above, bikes line the canals in Copenhagen, where chef Bryan Voltaggio traveled this summer — his third visit in two years — to attend a food festival.

Bryan Voltaggio

WHERE: Copenhagen, Denmark

HOW LONG: 5 days

WHEN: August

WHY: For the annual MAD Symposium, curated and hosted by chef Rene Redzepi of Noma restaurant, the internationally renowned Michelin two-star restaurant. MAD is a food festival in Copenhagen designed to inspire the sharing of expertise, knowledge and ideas on the history and future of all things food-related among the world's most celebrated culinary professionals. "This year's symposium was [themed] 'Guts,' selected by Rene Redzepi and the co-curators for this year — David Chang and the editorial team from Lucky Peach magazine," Voltaggio said. "It was about showing no restraints and becoming agents of change — taking risks and action." The symposium features some of the world's most prominent chefs for an open-forum discussion where they present life stories, business models and food concepts to an audience of chefs, sommeliers, baristas and journalists.

FIRST TIME VISIT? No. "This August was my third time in Copenhagen over the past two years."

TRAVEL COMPANIONS: "I traveled with my chef de cuisine at Volt, Graeme Ritchie, and also my brother, chef Michael Voltaggio [co-founder of Volt and now owner of the eateries ink and inksack in Hollywood, Calif]."

WHERE HE STAYED: "For lodging, we opted for Airbnb and stayed in an apartment close to where Noma and where the MAD circus tents were on Refshaleen in See **VACATION**, page 4



AMY DAVIS/SUN PHOTO 2013

Local personalities share travel stories, tips

BY STEPHANIE CITRON | For The Baltimore Sun

If the falling leaves, shorter days and the return of traffic jams on the JFX have you pining for those lost, carefree days of summer, we commiserate — especially after we tried to drown our end-of-summer blues in a sunny strawberries-and-creme Frappuccino only to discover it had been replaced with a dead leaf-colored, pumpkin-spiced concoction.

But rather than get your Halloween witch-face on prematurely, perhaps it's better to take the make-lemonade approach and begin planning your travels for next summer. But where to go and what to do?

For inspiration, we consulted with some local personalities about where they spent their summer vacations. Bryan Voltaggio (Maryland chef and recent finalist on "Top Chef Masters"), Ava Marie (WBAL meteorologist), Ray Mitchener (owner of Baltimore's Ruth Shaw boutique) and Patti Neumann (publisher of CityPeek Inc.) were only too happy to reminisce about their adventures this past summer.



BRYAN VOLTAGGIO PHOTO

Bryan Voltaggio discovered this unusual potato entree at the MAD Symposium, an annual food festival held this summer at the Noma restaurant in Copenhagen.

FROM PAGE ONE

Their summer vacations

VACATION. From page 1
Copenhagen.

WHAT HE ATE: "My most memorable meals were at Noma, Geranium and the new AKA. This was my third time dining at Noma over the past two years, and I was again blown away by the experience. It is really exciting to see a restaurant that has hit the highest levels and continues to create new ones. At Geranium, this was my first dining experience from a chef who has won the Bocuse D'Or Competition [an international cooking competition] and also

placed for silver and bronze two other years. No other chef has done that. The expected precision came through — I recognized it quickly with the very innovative canapés on arrival. AKA [was] just opened this summer by the former chef de cuisine at Noma and someone who I had the pleasure to work with early in my career at Aureole. Chef Matt Orlando's cuisine is some of the most exciting I have had this year. Every serving was very thoughtful, exciting and, most importantly, delicious. The night ended with a bonfire — they set

one up nightly out in the restaurant's garden. What a great night."

IF YOU GO: Expect to smile a lot. According to the World Happiness Report published by Columbia University's Earth Institute, the Danes are the happiest people in the world. Go to visitcopenhagen.com. Bryan Voltaggio flew SAS Airlines nonstop from Dulles. For lodging, Voltaggio rented an apartment through the website Airbnb.com, which offers travelers the opportunity to interact with owners to get details about the digs, the area and more.

Ava Marie

WHERE: Europe

HOW LONG: One week

WHEN: August

ALONE? No. "My husband and I traveled to Europe for our summer vacation. We took an interesting approach to it — a road trip. It was my first time going to Europe."

WHY: "We've been dying to do something big and extravagant," Marie said. "We both had started new jobs around the time that we got married, so this was like a long-overdue honeymoon and celebrated our second anniversary on the trip."

GETTING THERE: "I would recommend if you take an international flight, don't sit in the exit row. We found that out the hard way — the exit rows [seats] do not recline — we spent eight hours sitting straight up."

TRAVEL TIPS: "We flew into Paris, and from Paris we rented a car and drove all throughout northern France and then to Germany, Switzerland, through northern Italy to the French Riviera — Nice — and then back up to Paris. I calculated it was about 1500 miles in those seven days. I come from Colorado and he comes from Kansas, so we're used to driving long distances. We had great conversations on the road. We didn't even listen to the radio — it was just about soaking in the experience. It was even exciting to see road signs in a foreign language."

WHERE SHE STAYED: "Outside of Paris, we tried to stay [overnight] in smaller places, local villages, seeing small markets where the locals shop. In Nice, we stayed at the Beau Rivage, a small place by the beach. It was really neat to see the French Riviera. I definitely saw a few topless women — that can't be avoided on the coast of France — but it's interesting to see how life is so different in Europe."

WHAT SHE ATE: "I was so surprised when we stopped in a little cafe in France and ordered a sandwich, just how amazing it tasted. Everyone talks about the big, fancy restaurants, but even the little markets are great there. Their bread is so good. Everything tastes so fresh, so hearty, so homemade."

WHAT SHE PACKED: "They care about looking presentable at all times. I looked up ahead of time what to wear in Europe because I didn't want to look like an American tourist; I wanted to blend in. I



AVA MARIE PHOTO

WBAL weathercaster Ava Marie visited Castle Hill Park overlooking Nice, France, when she and her husband traveled to Europe during the summer.

was happy [when] people came up to us speaking French or German — I felt that I had succeeded in blending in."

HIGHLIGHTS: "For me, the biggest thing was seeing all the castles. That's just not something we have here. Here in America, the buildings are all a few hundred years old, and over there, we're talking thousands of years old. It seems impossible that those buildings are still standing; they're just so beautifully constructed. To think that they did that all by hand — manual labor. [Also] I was very happy we saw the Eiffel Tower. I know it's a big tourist spot, but hitting up some of those big icons was really important."

TRAVEL TIPS: "Wherever you go, it's important to learn just a few phrases by heart. Use 'Do you speak English?' and the common phrases of being polite. Hello, 'goodbye' and 'thank you.' These go a long

way. As long as people can tell that you are making an effort, they will have a lot more respect for you and will be more helpful. I think that's the whole point of going to another country — being put in situations to realize just that you are in a foreign land in the U.S. ... We brought a camera but chose not to take too many pictures because I really wanted to make certain I was living in the moment, not just sitting behind my camera lens. Sometimes you have to remember just to see it with your own eyes."

IF YOU GO: United and Air France fly nonstop from Dulles to Charles De Gaulle Airport in Paris.

If you choose, as Ava Marie and her husband did, to drive around Europe, go to autoeurope.com/ge/driving-information for country-by-country regulations and suggestions for trustworthy car rental agencies.



LUCAS JACKSON/REUTERS PHOTO
Models present creations from the 31 Phillip Lim Spring 2014 collection during New York Fashion Week in September.

Ray Mitchener

WHERE: New York City

HOW LONG: One day a week throughout summer and four days in September

WHY: "To buy for [the Ruth Shaw boutique for] spring 2014. And of course in September [for Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week]. Not every designer shows at the same time. I don't know why the Italians can't group themselves together and all show at once. It's shows one week, pre-spring the next, and then main collections a week or so after. My favorite shows were 31 Phillip Lim, Alexander Wang and Edun."

TRAVEL COMPANIONS: "I travel most with my assistant Maureen Gold and on occasion



Ray Mitchener

[with my husband.]"

GETTING THERE: "I used to drive to New York all the time, but now I like the comfort of the train. I can sleep, read or work on orders without having to keep my eye on traffic. I mostly take a taxi to get around the city. The subway sometimes takes too long and also doesn't have door-to-door service, and in the summer the heat underground is killer."

WHERE HE STAYED: "I tend to stay in midtown. I happen to like the Chambers Hotel on 54th Street. It's a convenient for my work [most of the European designers have showrooms in that area]."

WHAT HE ATE: "I'm serious about food, and I don't really like noisy restaurants. One of my new faves is Lafayette. It just opened in May — I think [the address is] 380 Lafayette St. in NoHo. I also like very much Mores at 240 Central Park South. It's rather pricey,

Patti Neumann

WHERE: Aspen, Colo.

WHEN: June

WHY? "I went to the Aspen Food and Wine Classic. ... I was so happy and in my element [there] with the leading chefs, wineries and luxury spirits of the world. This is the most prestigious and well-attended Food and Wine Classic of the year. It sells out every year."

WHAT SHE DRANK: "Landing [in Aspen], you realize you are not in Kansas anymore, with their tiny airport and lifestyle of the rich and famous."

WHERE SHE STAYED: "I was there for the entire weekend and was able to stay with one of my best friends who lives in Baltimore and Aspen."

HIGHLIGHTS: "[The festival] began with a phenomenal opening party with [Spanish chef and restaurateur] Jose Andre's Think Food Group. The rooms were packed with aficionados, foodies and wine experts from New Zealand to Napa to Baltimore. I was at an event called the Chef's Club from Food & Wine [magazine] and bumped into Maryland's own Michael Voltaggio. ... I met chef Jacques Pepin and his daughter, Claudine, and [Mark Stroobandt], the world-famous master beer sommelier. I sat in a social media seminar with Andrew Zimmern [Travel Channel's 'Bizarre Foods'] and John Bush [PBS cooking show host] and Chris Cosentino, the 'Top Chef Masters' champion known for his pork and lobster. Everywhere you looked was a stunning vista — a beautiful mountain, a clear blue sky, maybe a passing cloud. Then you look down, and there's the world's best chefs preparing wonderful food."

IF YOU GO: United Airlines flies from BWI through Denver into Aspen, Colo. Tickets for the Aspen Food and Wine Classic, held each year in June, go on sale in December. A day pass is \$700 per person, while a full package is around \$3,500. For more information, go to foodandwine.com/classic.



PATTI NEUMANN PHOTO

Patti Neumann, founder of CityPeak, at the Aspen Food and Wine Classic.

but the food is amazing.

HIGHLIGHTS: "I love New York. There is so much to see and do. There seems to be a market and *they always* on just about every corner. It's easy to get around the city. Yeah, I think New York would be a great place to retire."

IF YOU GO: New York City is 180 miles from Baltimore. Driving is a straight shot up Interstate 95 to the New Jersey Turnpike to Exit 16 — the Lincoln Tunnel.

Since highway tolls and parking are so expensive, many opt to take the train. Amtrak offers departures from Penn Station for as little as \$49 each way with a three-week advance booking. In the city, Mitchener prefers to stay at the Chambers Hotel, where rates begin at \$250 per night. Go to chambershotel.com.

For more information on visiting New York, go to nyc.gov.