CELEBRATING 15 YEARS
A HISTORIC ANNIVERSARY YEAR

OFF THE BEATEN PATH IN PHUKET
WUA ART GALLERY & STUDIO

TRAVEL STORIES FROM OUR STAFF
CAPTURED MOMENTS FROM PERU

Holiday Recipes from Our Staff

Bottling Love with Mollydooker

Member Focus

Holiday Inspiration for Absolute Members

INSPiRED
HOLIDAY INSPIRATION FOR ABSOLUTE MEMBERS

Celebrating 15 Years of Holiday Memories & Lifestyle Investment
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A CHRISTMAS GREETING FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014

As the Christmas season is now upon us I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a warm and wonderful time together, celebrating with loved ones wherever you may be over the holidays.

We have been coming of age over the last fifteen years. As we walk the path to our sixteenth year, we do so with confidence and with the awareness that there is still much to improve until we take our place at the top of our game, however one thing is for sure, we are all very happy you are joining us on this journey and look forward to seeing you for more holidays in 2014.

Happy reading, a very Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

Bryan Lunt

Bryan Lunt, Chairman & CEO
2013: A MEMBER’S DIGEST OF A HISTORIC ANNIVERSARY YEAR
The year kicked off with a trio of international honors at the prestigious Perspective Magazine awards, held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, Los Angeles, and from the start through to its conclusion, 2013 has been truly spectacular. The year was a celebration of the coming of age of an ever improving brand that is passionately engaged in delivering excellent value, satisfaction and alternative holiday and lifestyle experiences that exceed and continually outshine the industry standards.

Absolute’s 15th Anniversary has made for an unforgettable year - with our cherished members and guests at the forefront of their mind, our hard working, dedicated and talented teams across the world applied a tremendous amount of energy to ensure fun, merriment, amazement and cherished holiday experiences were thrown around like confetti.

Highlighted with the opening of Absolute Twin Sands Resort & Spa, our latest flagship resort on Phuket, the celebration continued with the sell out of the first and second phases, alongside this the now confirmed 2014 completion of the much anticipated designer boutique resort The Beach Samui, has made for a year that surpassed all expectations.

‘2013 has been a momentous year,’ explained an animated, Bryan Lunt, ‘nostalgia has a way of stopping you in your tracks on historic occasions and this year has been a landmark year for me, both personally and as CEO. The journey from humble beginnings as a traditional timeshare company, through the many learning curves and challenges, to award winning achievements has not always been easy. I have reflected on the bygone years a lot over the past 12 months, and when I do I feel a great sense of accomplishment and excitement at our direction.’

‘It’s amazing to see how we have evolved from a fledgling timeshare company, and with dogged determination, passion and creativity…are gradually progressing and moving forward strategically, to become a brand that oozes quality, style, sophistication, experience and above all honesty and integrity. We are out there leading the market, setting higher and higher standards and offering our members exactly what they desire. Listening to both industry and client feedback, we have learned to take orders, we understand what is required from us and we have made an undertaking to come up with the goods and furnish our guest with every holiday desire they wish for.’

Every second of every minute, every minute of every hour, every hour of every day, every day of every week, every week of every month and every month of every year for the past fifteen years and for the next fifteen, and more…someone, somewhere around the globe was, is or will be playing an integral part of Absolute World’s workings, the mechanism never stops.
Absolute’s global team, a talented and skilled group of individuals who are in tune with and understand the magnitude and importance of delivering higher and higher holiday standards, is the backbone and the core strength of Absolute’s world.

In acknowledgement Bryan said: ‘We would not be the flourishing company we are today if it was not for the impressive team we have established. As a global enterprise we have many duties to perform and a dedicated team with the necessary skills is paramount. We understand that we are not even halfway through the redevelopment and restructuring of our products, resorts and services, but we keep ourselves fixed on our longer term goal: to provide a lifetime of holiday memories through the development of fantastic resorts with incredible service, value and experiences. We are sure members both old and new have noticed tremendous change and are also excited to be part of our transition from a traditional timeshare company of old.’

‘As well as investing in our employees and offering holiday enhancing opportunities, we have a responsibility to the environment, to local communities, to sustainability and to creating harmonious relationships and cohesive developments that blend with the surroundings. Behind the scenes and front of house the works never stop, we are literally operating every second of every day. After all these years I still find that hard to comprehend.

A 100% increase in the reservations and members service team and upgrading communications, information and technologies, has made provision for a more focused, appealing and interactive forum. Synchronized and on the ball, Absolute’s team accommodate members and owners who speak a variety of 19 languages from 27 countries across the globe, all in a day’s work.

With a focus on continuing to create high caliber award winning destinations, luxurious accommodation and rejuvenating and upgrading our concerns for excellence as standard, and further updating and fine-tuning customer relations and interaction, Absolute have brought in a very well seasoned professional to further enhance the Company’s winning profile.

Christopher Newbery, Absolute World Group’s recently appointed Director of Hotel Operations has managed hotels such as Corinthia, Kempinski, Disneyland and Hilton, and his 45-year hospitality industry experience has been picked up from a diverse range of places including Beijing, Berlin, Cameroon, Khartoum, Kabul, London, Madagascar, Mumbai, Paris and now he is happy to add Absolute World Group, Phuket and Koh Samui to his impressive lists.

May 2014 - We Will Be Open!
Absolute’s recent growth and development spurt created the opening for a specialist to be appointed to oversee and manage hotel operations to enhance our hospitality and your holidays to the highest level and Christopher has the credentials to take charge, organize, direct and implement the best strategic approach to Absolute’s every growing business concern, he said: ‘Primarily, I accepted the position as I feel it will be stimulating and rewarding as it is a fresh approach for me, my first position in shared ownership or vacation ownership, so I look forward to the new dynamics involved, besides this Absolute’s designs for the future growth of the company are tremendously exciting. Therefore, I will make my first mark by placing hospitality training high on the agenda, not only skills training, but also supervisory and leadership skills training will feature prominently, and I look forward to forming the perfect team to cater to our guests every whim.’

Fine tuning of resort operations to the needs of the clientele, further and ongoing clear guidelines and training as to the standards to be maintained and the methods to be used to achieve the common objective, for all employees. The continued attention to the quality of employees recruited to ensure that the caliber of candidates is in keeping with Absolute’s standards. To set up a system which will make for a more effective response to guest and member feedback which includes quality ratings by resort and benchmarking the performance of key personnel in response to guest opinions, are some of the tasks Christopher has set himself as he takes to his duties with his suave and professional approach.

Additionally and alongside our senior team, Christopher will be involved with the planning for the opening of The Beach, Koh Samui, in the early months of 2014, and thereafter, the building of Phase II of Twin Sands will be well under way to keep him very busy.

Improved training and focus on management to ultimately enhance your holiday experience overall is paramount, however the past year has also seen a spotlight glowing on Absolute’s Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

The past 15 years of Absolute World Group’s CSR activities have provided a foundation on which to build, and moving into the 15th Anniversary year and beyond, three core values were sewn into Absolute’s impressive tapestry of Corporate Social Responsibility:Holiday Smarter, Holiday Fitter, is a health conscious initiative that facilitates the occasion to apply a healthier approach to holidays for members and their guests.

Building on past success of the hugely popular Staff Boot Camps, which are being expanded in size and frequency to encourage guest participation, health and fitness and personal wellbeing are options that are always available and encouraged. A soon to be released edition is the launch of a series of exercise in your room and cookery how-to videos available on the in-roomentertainment system for guests and members to enjoy at their leisure and hosted by our Chef’s and affiliate fitness experts.

‘It’s fantastic to see so many of our staff taking advantage of this great initiative!’ Said Bryan, who is an avid promoter and
side salad and vegetables that compliment the meal. Watch this space for the next magnificent chapter of Thong Krut Green Club and read how sustainability, community cohesion and environmentalism are written into the award winning narrative of The Beach Samui - all with the intention of creating the most incredible and unique holiday memories for our Members, Owners and their Guests.

‘Corporate Social Responsibility is something that has been a part of Absolute World Group since our beginning. We are very much aware of our social responsibility. Developing on our past initiatives, we felt it important to enhance our CSR programmes and extend a fresh approach with novel initiatives... so we fashioned three core values to unite, implement and evaluate all our CSR activities.

‘In accordance with our responsibility and our commitment to the communities and environments we operate within, we have raised the game and brought on board a dedicated CSR Coordinator who, together with our senior team, is continually working on writing and implementing innovative initiatives with our senior team, that we will cultivate and continue to grow for the next 15 years and beyond,’ remarked a passionate Bryan.

In December it was decided that a bigger trophy cabinet was an absolute necessity. The year concluded, as it had begun. We attended the 2013 OPP Awards for Excellence and walked away from a glittering ceremony at London’s Natural History Museum, clutching an OPP Award from the Best Fractional Schemes category. It sits proudly alongside the collection of accolades and international acknowledgements from the Bloomberg International Property Awards to Euromoney, to awards from the American Resort Development Association (ARDA), to the Overseas Property Professional awards, Fractional Life Awards, the Thailand Property Awards and the South East Asia Property Awards.

As the Anniversary year comes to a close and the Monumental achievements are marked across our facebook community, Absolute World Group, where we enjoy interacting with you all, the daily union of hundreds of individuals, working like a finely calibrated Swiss watch, continue to improve our game and deliver prestige and excellence, as standard, says hello to 2014, thrilled, energized and without doubt enthusiastically prepared to share with you our sweet sixteenth birthday.

In conclusion, Bryan said: ‘Absolute have been coming of age and striding in to their own place over the last fifteen years. As we walk the path to our sixteenth year, we do so with new blood, originality, confidence and acknowledge there is still much to improve until we take our place at the head of the table, however one thing is for sure, we are all very happy you are joining us on this riveting journey.’
A SYNERGY OF INTERNATIONAL FLAVOURS THAT IS SURE TO EXPAND YOUR DINING EXPERIENCE.
COME, DISCOVER BLUE MANGO AT THE PEACEFUL END OF PATONG.

ABSOLUTE TWIN SANDS RESORT & SPA, THAWEEWONG RD, TRI TRANG, BAN PATONG, PHUKET, THAILAND 83150
BOOKING: 076 302 099 OR EMAIL: INFO@BLUEMANGOASIA.COM
WWW.BLUEMANGOASIA.COM
AN ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

INTRODUCING CHRISTOPHER NEWBERRY, YOUR NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF HOTEL OPERATIONS

FROM CORINTHIA TO KEMPINSKI, DISNEYLAND TO HILTON AND IN A VARIETY OF EXCITING AND SOME PERHAPS CHALLENGING CITIES, BEIJING, BERLIN, CAMEROON, KHARTOUM, KABUL, LONDON, MADAGASCAR, MUMBAI, PARIS, WE WELCOME OUR NEW DIRECTOR OF HOTEL OPERATIONS TO THAILAND.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN DRIVERS IN YOUR DECISION TO ACCEPT THE POSITION OF DIRECTOR OF HOTEL OPERATIONS?

A new focus, a new location, a new challenge and new horizons! Having grown my career over the past 45 years with many internationally renowned hotel operators, in a variety of diverse and interesting posts in locations such as Khartoum, London, Mumbai and Madagascar, moving to Absolute World Group was interesting, in so far that I had not previously worked with a shared or vacation ownership brand. Primarily, I accepted the position as I feel the fresh approach Absolute have will also ensure that the calibre of candidates is in keeping with Absolute’s standards, moving forward.

YOUR CAREER IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY HAS SEEN YOU HOLDING GENERAL MANAGEMENT POSITIONS FOR SOME OF THE WORLD’S LEADING HOTELS. THAILAND IS OF COURSE KNOWN FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEVELS OF HOSPITALITY, HOW ARE YOU FINDING THIS COMPARISON?

My experience so far of living and working in Phuket has revealed that there appears to be a much caring attitude to hospitality, which is outwardly friendly and courteous, however, I feel that beneath the surface I can, as I have done in all my previous positions, inject more energy to generate a budding environment of initiatives and creativity towards the guest experience. It is difficult to make comparisons with other countries I have worked in as each country has its own unique and diverse range of challenges.

WHAT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE DO YOU FEEL WILL BENEFIT THE ABSOLUTE WORLD GROUP MOST BASED ON YOUR EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN THE GLOBAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

Definitely the additional fine tuning of resort operations with the guest in mind. The resort employees need to receive further and on-going clear guidelines and training as to the high standards to be maintained and the methods to be used to achieve the common objective of satisfying the needs of this diverse mix of customers. Training will therefore be high on the agenda, not only skills training, but also supervisory and leadership skills training will feature prominently. Continued attention to the quality of employees we recruit will also ensure that the calibre of candidates is in keeping with Absolute’s standards, moving forward.

YOUR WORLDWIDE HOSPITALITY EXPERIENCE IS EXTENSIVE, WHAT KEEPS YOUR PASSION FOR WORKING IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY?

The adventure of experiencing new places and new cultures, the challenge and rewards of maintaining and enhancing prospects of a team of service oriented individuals to provide high quality service in an environment where the quality of life of the employees themselves is radically different to the values expected of them inside the hotels/resorts, and the pleasure of seeing guest ratings improve and the smiling faces of happy vacationers and employees alike are a few of the motivators that I find stimulate my passion.

THE GLOBAL RECESSION HAS LED MANY TRAVELLERS TO RETHINK THEIR VACATION SPENDING AND LOOK AT LESS TRADITIONAL ROUTES SUCH AS SHARED OWNERSHIP OR VACATION OWNERSHIP AS PERHAPS A MORE ECONOMICAL MEANS TO HOLIDAY. HAVING BEEN PART OF THE ABSOLUTE WORLD GROUP FOR A FEW MONTHS NOW, WHAT DO YOU THINK PUTS THEM APART FROM THEIR COMPETITORS IN THAILAND THAT WILL ENCOURAGE RETURNING AND NEW HOLIDAYMAKERS TO THEIR RESORTS?

“Small is Beautiful” is certainly a phrase which comes to mind when I think of Absolute Resorts versus its larger competitors. This is a boutique company with...
a big vision, which, over 15 years, has been strategically investing in both hard and soft resources to fulfil that vision, providing top quality destinations to its investors and members from a wide geographical spectrum. As Phases II and III come on line at Absolute Twin Sands Resort and Spa and The Beach Samui on Koh Samui opens, we will have the fundamentals in place to advance our bespoke accommodation and facilities and offer outstanding service to a discerning clientele at a very reasonable price. This select approach sets Absolute World Group apart from its larger competitors and makes for a more exclusive and personally attentive holiday experience.

**ABSOLUTE HAS A WELL-PUBLICISED COMMITMENT TO ITS STAFF TRAINING. WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, WHAT SKILLS DO YOU FEEL YOU CAN BRING TO ASSIST STAFF WITH BOTH THEIR PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT?**

The resorts operational team is currently working on the training plan for 2014, which will include building a stronger training culture through developing certified trainers in each department, leadership and supervisory skills training courses for those already in or about to be appointed to supervisory or management level positions, as well as a number of generic training courses, all of which will be led internally by qualified instructors, such as myself. Training is often much criticized, but all it takes is for the person at the top to show a real interest in the training activities and positive results flow through to the comments we receive from our guests and members. Active participation in the training role by a leader is vital in stimulating the interest of staff and securing the technical knowledge to provide a consistent service. I will ensure that the Absolute Resorts Department Heads show the leadership skills required to earn the respect of their team members and to work in unison as a group to enhance the customer experience beyond their expectations.

**YOU HAVE CERTAINLY HIT THE GROUND RUNNING SINCE YOUR ARRIVAL IN PHUKET! WHAT ARE YOUR IMPRESSIONS FIRST OF LIVING IN THAILAND AND WORKING WITH OUR THAI STAFF? WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND SPECIAL ABOUT THE THAI CULTURE THAT ATTRACTION YOU TO MOVE HERE?**

My first impression is that I think I am going to enjoy and benefit from living and working in Thailand. Our staff epitomise the Thai culture as we understand it from travel media. They are gracious, mild mannered and courteous - a real joy to work with. As this is my first venture into South East Asia, despite being married to a Chinese national, I find the Buddhist rituals and cultural traits fascinating and I look forward to spending more time travelling the country to find out more about the culture, philosophy, spirituality and environment of the Kingdom.

**HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DOWNTIME?**

So far, much of it is spent in Patong itself, trying different restaurants, buying local produce at the traditional markets and getting used to the capricious climate. My wife and I have travelled up and down the West coast of Phuket Island, visiting competitor hotels and resorts, but we still have a lot more to explore. There is much to see and do in and around Phuket so I have begun compiling an itinerary, which should keep me occupied for the foreseeable future and of course my exciting finds I look forward to sharing with our guests.

**WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR 2014?**

To set up a system which will make us more effective at responding to guest and member feedback, this will include quality ratings by resort and benchmarking the performance of key personnel in response to guest opinions.

I also believe that we can do more as a company with regard to central purchasing and accounting, which I have already started work on with my teams and colleagues. Additionally, together with the development team, I will be involved with the planning for the opening of The Beach Samui, to which we will be dedicated in the early months of 2014, and thereafter, the building of Phase II of Twin Sands will be well underway, so in the latter half of 2014, I expect to be actively involved in setting up the additional accommodation there. As stated previously, training will also be a high priority throughout 2014, and I expect to spend quite some time developing new training courses with my teams.

**IF I WERE TO ASK YOU TO SUM UP WHAT WORKING FOR ABSOLUTE WORLD GROUP MEANS TO YOU, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?**

It is an opportunity to become an integral part of an inventive and highly ambitious company with an impressive pedigree and a motivated talent that seeks big objectives, for my part I am excited and relish the opportunity to be part of Absolute World Group’s energetic approach to development.
An owner’s story

BOTTLING LOVE
WITH SARAH AND SPARKY MARQUIS

December 2013
A SWEET SIP FROM THE VELVET GLOVE SHIRAZ IS ENOUGH TO CONFIRM ANYONE’S PASSION FOR THE FABULOUS MOLLYDOOKER WINE BRAND, AND AS THE FAMILY OWN A STUNNING NEW APARTMENT AT THE BEACH SAMUI WE WERE CERTAINLY KEEN TO DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE WARMING STORY BEHIND THE BRAND AND TO EXPLORE A FUTURE PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPLY THEIR DELICIOUS AWARD WINNING WINES ACROSS OUR ABSOLUTE RESORTS FOR YOU, OUR MEMBERS AND YOUR GUESTS, TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY WHILST TAKING IN A SUNSET OR TWO IN PARASIDE…

THE MOLLYDOOKER STORY

On becoming acquainted with the Mollydooker World (Australian slang for a left-handed person), it is apparent that the dynamic husband and wife at the forefront of the brand, Sarah and Sparky Marquis, are a couple of mavericks.

The evidence suggests they are all about the creation of a uniquely appealing and premium product, creatively advancing their art and doing the ‘Mollydooker Shake’ with their many avid, and celebrity fans (Google ‘Mollydooker Shake’ for those not in the know). Blissfully, they are happy to disturb the ordinary to progress their very distinctive direction, and put their own unique WOW factor in every bottle of wine they make.

Visionary rebels, the pair were raised with the vine and passionately took to the industry from an early age. Leaving their winemaking families they went off to university to study, saying:

‘Of course I will come back home to roost and make happy with the family business.’ However, that was not to be. At least for a while.

Sarah spied Sparky soaking up the university knowledge, completing his thesis on canopy management, scooping up awards and prizes for his hard work and creativity and commanding an overseas travel scholarship.

Energetic and fun loving, Sarah’s beauty, creative spirit, vivacity and her wanderlust turned Sparky’s head from his studies, and as the young lady breezed through her exams... fate and Sparky became good buddies and set to work on alerting Sarah to the fact that young Mr. Spark, was the Yang to her Ying.

Starting out with the support of Sarah’s parents at Fox Creek, they built a winery, and began working on creatively perfecting their art, winemaking, and had dreams of becoming the Picassos of the wine world.
From their assemblage, in 1991, Sarah & Sparky were familiar with success and had become incredibly close, their marriage and working union was melodious. In-tune - their song was sweet as they danced their inspired wine making dance.

Filled with love, fun and ambition they were pioneers in changing times in the wine industry and as the market place expanded, wine underwent a massive marketing makeover and discarded its pompous and high-status image. The intimidating experience, the gamble of choosing a bottle of costly European wine from an anonymous selection of pricey bottles on the wine merchants or supermarket shelf, simply stopped.

No more would the novice have to opt for a bottle of Blue Nun, or a ropey Rioja. The sickly sweet Liebfraumilch was no longer the safe option and the appeal of the round Mateus Rose bottle had lost its charm.

The European wine producing market had taken a siesta and as it snoozed in its pious regalia. A whole new world walked through the front door.

It is argued that the Australians are to blame. They had the cheek to start making reasonably priced wines that tasted ripe, fresh, fruity and paired, like love birds, with the modern palate. Genius.

Success for Australia inspired and motivated Chile, California, South Africa and Argentina to take a peep at what the Australians were up to and they wanted a piece of the market.

High public visibility and a big marketing spend brought wine from the cellar, dusted it down and made it over, offered a glass to everyday people and kick-started a trend.

Being the pebble that stimulated the trend, Australia, resonated well in the global wine market. Learning to make wines that please the drinker, opposed to offering the drinker the wines you make. Giving the customer what they want, tailoring the product to fit, snug... pragmatic, Sarah and Sparky, had the intellect and they were going to use it to get them a piece of the action.

The creative rebels became aware that they needed a new impetus, Sparky’s spark needed a-kindling, so, he said: ‘Mom, Dad, sell up and come join us, we can’t fail. Trust me; we will make the best quality bulk wine in Australia. Sell it easily. We’ll start in the vineyards in January, harvest in March, sell it in June, and then, go skiing for six months!!’

Fortune is said to favour the brave and this brave couple together with Sparky’s parent’s Janet and Leigh, favoured fortune. They had little reason to doubt their own shrewd business credentials until the day that disaster struck a shattering blow... wallop then... bang... not a pretty picture. Wine that sold the previous year for $7 a litre was humiliated and cheapened to 25 cents a litre; embarrassed, it was a sad day for wine. Sarah and Sparky had quality red wines to sell, but the market wanted Chardonnay.

Worry not; it was not long before success returned and they were soon back in the good books with the joint accountant. Their venture with the Marquis Philips brand bloomed from 8,000 to 120,000 cases in four years. Lessons learned... it was a good time to take stock.

For a spell, Sparky & Sarah stopped to look at their account and weigh up their holdings. Talk ‘of growing bigger’ and the words lots of money, corporate and compromise on quality, headed the debate.

So, spoke the ever sharp Sarah, ‘I don’t want to grow bigger and produce the million cases a year that you speak of... I am more attracted to going in our own direction, alone.

‘We love the vineyards!’ Yes? We love being around and in touch with wine! Yes? We love the experience of sharing with and being close to family and friends! Yes? We love to be creative and clever! Yes? We love to be in charge! Yes? We love each other! Yes?

‘I say we take all we love, turn it in to our own unique brand and bottle it.’

Wisdom chaired the proceedings. Talk of growing bigger put-up a strong argument. But Sarah and Sparky had heard it all before...it was apparent, ‘We must follow Love.’

The 15 years mastering their art, crafting their talent and maturing
their joint assets had set the stage, the fantabulous and flamboyant theatrical brand that is now known and loved the world over was about to take centre stage!

Branded, Mollydooker, in 2006, the duo invested every last dollar they owned and all of the ones they loaned from banks and parents.

The couple were all set to roll out their own barrel, problem was they were now penniless with nothing left to invest and no one left to run to, the vibrant duo were in no position to bottle the wines and the newly created brand was in trouble.

Everyone rallied round to help. Staff offered to take a salary drop, growers offered to take late payments, and suppliers offered extended terms. Still, without the much-needed capital the tenacious couple would lose everything.

Serendipity had always kept a close eye on the dynamic duo; she had been around since the beginning... she was keen to see to it that wine drinkers were afforded the opportunity to taste the talents of the original assemblage she had brought about. Fondness for the couple and tasked with the promotion of good wine, destiny saw to it that a little dicky-bird whispered a tale in to a local business man’s ear.

Enamoured, the said philanthropist gave Sparky leave to shed tears and cry as Sarah stood nearby. Dumbfounded, she watched as a cheque was written and handed to Sparky. The kindness of humanity, in the form of the stranger who stood before her, the knowledge that they would not go bankrupt and Sparky’s tears brought about Sarah’s own cry as gratitude, joy and happiness sounded a fanfare.

HOW TO DO
THE MOLLYDOOKER SHAKE

At Mollydooker, the Marquis’ make their wine in their own way. Infusing Nitrogen in the wine making process, they are able to add less sulphites, in order to preserve the wine and prevent oxidation. However, the nitrogen tends to flatten the round fruit flavours in the wine, making the shake necessary.

1. Open the bottle and pour half a glass (so the wine just hits the top of the shoulder of the bottle).
2. Reseal the bottle (All Mollydookers come with a screw cap).
3. Flip the bottle over and shake.
4. You’ll see little bubbles rise to the top of the bottle (this is the Nitrogen).
5. Put the bottle back down and open to release the bottle.
6. Repeat steps 2-5.
7. Pour yourself a glass.
An owner’s story

No intention or budget for marketing their wine; the couple relied on their impressive standing in the industry, their creative, fun and theatrical brand image and a quality product to do the talking and make the sales.

Indulging her artistic flair, Sarah took to design, she skilfully crafted the couple’s creative passion, family characteristics and love of life and formed them to produce the eye-catching visual identity of the brand.

Merrymaking labels featuring their children, Luke and Holly, the passionate Carnival of Love, the tender Enchanted Path, and the sophisticated charm of Velvet Glove (for which Sarah, received the Australian Packaging Award), are a few of the creatively welcoming and recognisable Mollydooker labels.

Soon after the brand was launched, the Marquis’s were once again receiving awards and being honoured for their creative endeavours. The Wine Advocate exclaimed that Mollydooker’s, The Boxer, was packing such a punch that it was voted the Best Value Red Wine in the World. The sheer exuberance of Two Left Feet earned it the title of the second best wine in the world and the charming Maitre D’ was named as fourth best wine in the world.

The couples creative genius and inventive role, coupled with the Marquis Vineyard Watering Programme™, and personal attention to detail ensures Mollydooker wine has upfront and friendly characters that are bold, rich and instantly friendly with the palate.

The scintillating concerto played by the Violinist was acknowledged as the Best Value White Wine in the world! The wines sold out in nineteen days, all accounts were settled and Mollydooker wine became a taste synonymous with WOW.

Sarah and Sparky are now among the most decorated winemakers in the world. The Velvet Glove is the fifth wine of theirs to be awarded 99 points; the Carnival of Love has twice been in the Wine Spectator’s
Top Ten wines in the World. The Boxer is colossal, since 2011 it has had its own special release day.

Another special release, The Ringmaster General, a collaboration produced and developed with wine enthusiast, Dave Stewart, is as perfectly pitched as the partnership Dave had with Annie in the Eurythmics.

A fan of Mollydooker wine, Dave made sure his tour in Australia would take him close to McLaren Vale, Adelaide, he was keen to stop and get a case or two. On meeting Sarah and Sparky and speaking for a while, he said: ‘I’d like to make a wine with you.’

After meeting a few more times he said: ‘I just became really friendly with them, it was a meeting of two crazy minds.’

On getting to know them, he said: ‘Declarations of the most ‘daring’, ‘amazing’, ‘spectacular’ are commonly used when introducing circus performers. Sarah and Sparky to me are the Flying Trapeze artists of the wine industry and I’m so honoured to collaborate with them and their ‘Mollydooker Circus’ to create ‘The Greatest Wine on Earth’.

Since its first word was spoken the Mollydooker narrative has been a riveting tale, a fervent love story of how a young couple stayed in touch with their creative passion, expressed themselves, nurtured their ambition, believed, worked hard and yielded a stupendous victory.

THE ABSOLUTE CONNECTION

It was that old devil called love we heard Sarah speak about that convinced Sparky’s parents Janet and Leigh Gawith, to purchase a share in a stunning apartment at The Beach Samui - those endless turquoise views, the air of ultimate escapism and of course a certain design flair, the appeal was enhanced no end.

‘The view is spectacular, with colourful fishing boats, locals fossicking for bait on the low tide beach, and the marine park in the distance. We fell in love! This was the ideal place for us, we work pretty hard, so a holiday to us is peace and quiet and quality time with the family,’ said a jubilant, Janet.

Charmed and excited to be part of Absolute World, Janet and Leigh, initially joined as vacation club members. Spending two weeks holidaying at Q Signature on Koh Samui before enjoying a complimentary week at Nakalay, in Phuket, gave the Gawith’s opportunity to experience the excellence and breakthrough style applied to Absolute’s own products and resorts.

‘What a revelation! We’d expected the usual anonymous holiday, where nobody knew us or cared about us, but instead found we were met and surrounded by friends,’ said Janet.

Animated, Sparky’s mom went on to describe how Mr Wong picked up the couple at the airport and took them on trips and tours. And Simon looked after their every need, and with his partner Moo, took the couple out on the town to make sure that they didn’t miss any of the local experiences. What they had experienced on their Absolute holiday reflected an air of their own values.

A very happy Janet concluded, saying: ‘We have got a fantastic deal... we have a share in a one million dollar dream apartment, available just when we want it, in one of the most beautiful spots imaginable.’

‘We came back to Q Signature this year for 3 weeks, another very happy stay, and visited The Beach Samui twice. We were thrilled to see how the resort is coming along, and how detailed the design team are in getting everything just right. It is going to be spectacular... we can’t wait for next year.’
You will receive:

- A Winemaker’s Dozen of our current vintage wines (value $662)
  - The Violinist Verdelho; The Scooter Merlot; The Maitre D' Cabernet;
  - Two Left Feet Shiraz/Cab/Merlot; The Boxer Shiraz;
  - Gigglepot Cabernet; Blue Eyed Boy Shiraz; Enchanted Path Shiraz/Cab;
  - Carnival of Love Shiraz; the exquisite Velvet Glove Shiraz; a Mollydooker Gift and two Miss Molly Sparkling Shiraz to celebrate with!

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With just a few months until we expect to welcome you to paradise and to our stunning new designer Boutique Hotel, The Beach Samui, our design team are working hard over the holidays to ensure we remain on schedule. We are looking to open around May 2014 and in the next edition we look forward to giving you a final sneak peek.

Bryan Lunt was on site earlier this month to give you an update and things are really starting to take shape…
While wandering the old town district of Phuket, you must visit the Wua Art Gallery & Studio located on Phang Nga Road. A colorful shop house filled with minimalist paintings, the gallery & studio buildings are also home to Mr. Zen, his wife Pui and their budding artist daughter, Dina.

Mr. Zen is one of Thailand’s most sought after original artists with exhibitions throughout Asia and Europe. His minimalist paintings often showcase one man deep in thought. Much like Mr. Zen himself, who quietly says he is a student of art, always observing and learning.

Both buildings that encompass the Wua Art Gallery & Studio are inviting places. Warmly Welcome to Walk Inside is painted across the window, and when you do head inside, you’ll see a variety of oil paintings on canvas, small sculptures from driftwood, a variety of hanging...
lamps and chairs, and creative little works from Mr. Zen and Pui’s daughter, Dina, scattered across the gallery.

The Wua Art Gallery & Studio is open until 10:00pm each evening. Stop in for a look and a chat. Mr. Zen and his family are happy to sit and talk about art, or also offer advice on what to see and do in and around the Old Town District.

For more information on the Wua Art Gallery & Studio, please visit www.wua-artgallery.com
PEOPLE TRAVEL FOR DIFFERENT REASONS: SOME WANT TO EXPERIENCE NEW PLACES, OTHERS PREFER TO HONE THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS, OTHERS MAY VISIT FAMILY, MANY SEEK RELAXATION OR ENLIGHTENMENT - ONE THING IS CERTAIN, WE ALL TRAVEL FOR THE ADVENTURE. THERE IS SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR EXPERIENCING NEW CULTURES, EATING LOCAL CUISINE, FEELING LIKE YOU ARE A PART OF A PLACE THAT IS SO DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU ARE USED TO...

Olga Kulikova is PA to our Global Chief Operations Officer and based in Spain and a Russian native. Like you, she loves to travel. Whether it’s weekend jaunts to London or long haul trips to exotic destinations, Olga values her annual summer holiday to satisfy her wanderlust.

Recently, she had the opportunity to embark on a holiday of a lifetime to Peru and here she shares her experiences with us:

Dear members. I visited Peru in October of this year, spending time in the jungle and in the Andes Mountains, experiencing the villages of San Ramon and La Merced.
In the jungle, I had the amazing opportunity to spend time with the indigenous Shipiva tribe and seeing how they live. Just incredible. I was amazed by the richness of flora and fauna in the jungle, and also by the variety of exotic fruits.

In the Andes Mountains, I climbed to the top - 5900 meters above sea level! I had to chew coca leaves to combat altitude sickness.

Peru is an amazingly beautiful country, it has jungles, mountains and the coast. I will definitely go back. In the future, I plan to visit Machu Picchu, Cuzco, the Nazca lines and Lake Titicaca.

It’s really great at least once a year to take a trip to new place to broaden your experiences as a global traveller. I wish everyone many unforgettable holidays in the coming New Year!

We think it’s so important to share holiday memories, tips and advice and welcome your own personal holiday stories.

And whilst we do not currently offer Peru as part of our extensive destination collection, we are of course happy to look into this and any other destinations you may have a particular urge to discover. To share your memories and ideas please get in touch at inspired@absolutewORLD.net

December 2013
Stunning ocean views, full furnished contemporary apartment and five-star service in an outstanding peninsula setting on the spectacular west coast of Phuket, Thailand.

Your first view, experience the ultimate resort lifestyle by booking a private resort viewing or 3-night stay for $199. Please contact a member of the dedicated Jones Lang LaSalle team:

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Introducing Twin Sands Exciting Final Phases

Following a hugely successful opening and sell out first phase and second phases, International estate agent Jones Lang LaSalle and award-winning resort developer the Absolute World Group are delighted to bring you an early opportunity to own a stunning apartment in the third and final phase of this spectacular resort on the celebrated island of Phuket, before general worldwide release.

Nestled between two white sand beaches and set within a breathtaking peninsula, boasting remarkable views, the newly opened Absolute Twin Sands Resort & Spa, on Phuket’s west coast, is the ultimate resort getaway. The resort’s final phase offers a range of fully furnished villa-style apartments with access to an exciting range of new services and facilities plus exceptional yields fixed at 6% per annum*, providing the perfect lifestyle investment into Thailand, one of the world’s most attractive holiday markets.

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Experience before you buy.

3 nights in the resorts, 1st phase for $199.
CHRISTMAS RECIPES
HOLIDAY FAVORITES FROM OUR STAFF

THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS DINNER IS FAVOURED THE WORLD OVER AND IS A TIME WHEN FAMILIES AND FRIENDS CELEBRATE TOGETHER.

OUR TEAMS CELEBRATE ALL OVER THE WORLD AND WITH THIS IN MIND WE WANTED TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF OUR FAVORITE CHRISTMAS RECIPES, WE ASKED AN IRISHMAN, TWO WELSHMEN, A RUSSIAN AND TWO AMERICANS FOR THEIR SUGGESTIONS. SO, FROM OUR TABLE TO YOURS, ENJOY...

SAUSAGE, DRIED CHERRY & PECAN STUFFING
Submitted by Anthony Healy, Executive Chef - Absolute Resorts & Hotels, Thailand

Start with a quality, crusty loaf of bread. Use stale bread or allow bread cubes to dry overnight. Tear, don’t cube, the bread for more surface area. Bake outside of the bird for better-textured, less soggy stuffing.

INGREDIENTS
- 1 1/2 sticks butter
- 9 cups stale, crusty bread, torn into cubes
- 2 mild Italian sausage links (may use breakfast sausage if preferred)
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups diced celery
- 1 yellow delicious apple, peeled, cored and diced
- 3/4 cup dried tart cherries
- 1 cup chopped, roasted pecans
- 2 teaspoons dried sage
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups chicken broth (if salty decrease kosher salt amount)

METHOD
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Remove sausage from casings and saute in large skillet till brown, breaking up into small pieces. Remove sausage from pan and set aside, and add butter to skillet. Saute onion, celery and apple in butter till tender.

Put bread cubes in large bowl and add sausage and onion mixture. Add cherries, pecans, herbs, salt and pepper and mix to combine. In a large measuring cup or bowl, whisk eggs into chicken broth. Add to bread cubes and toss till combined. Allow bread to soak up excess liquid.

Place stuffing into a greased 9 x 13 casserole. Cover with foil and bake for about 40 minutes. Remove foil and broil briefly for more crispiness if desired.
WELSH RAREBIT

Submitted by Philip Mason, Director of Operations - Thailand

INGREDIENTS

- Slices of crusty bread, buttered & browned under the broiler
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup beer
- 1 teaspoon (heaping) dry mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 2 dashes worcestershire
- 1-1/2 cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 whole egg yolk
- Fresh chives, chopped

METHOD

Melt butter in a saucepan over low heat. Sprinkle in flour and whisk together until combined. Cook over low heat for 2 minutes. Pour in milk and beer, whisking constantly, and cook for an additional minute. Add mustard, paprika, and cayenne and whisk. Add cheese and whisk slowly, cooking for a couple of minutes or until smooth, melted, and very hot. Remove from heat and whisk in egg yolk, Serve immediately (while hot) over toast. Sprinkle with chopped chives before serving.

ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

Submitted by Amy Bensema, Online Community Support & Member Magazine Editor

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed and yellow leaves removed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (205 degrees C). Place trimmed brussels sprouts, olive oil, kosher salt, and pepper in a large resealable plastic bag. Seal tightly. Pour onto a baking sheet, and shake to coat. Place on center oven rack. Roast in the preheated oven for 30 to 45 minutes, shaking pan every 5 to 7 minutes for even browning. Reduce heat when necessary to prevent burning. Brussels sprouts should be darkest brown, almost black, when done. Adjust seasoning with kosher salt, if necessary. Serve immediately.
LEMON ROASTED POTATOES
Submitted by
Geraint Lewis, Customer Service & Reservations
Supervisor - Phuket

INGREDIENTS
- 3kg of potatoes, peeled and cut into 3cm chunks
- 2 whole lemons, cut into 2cm wedges
- 1 head of garlic, broken into cloves, unpeeled
- A bunch of thyme
- Olive Oil

METHOD
Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the potatoes in a large pan of salted cold water.

Bring the water to a boil, cook for five minutes until parboiled, then drain and leave to steam dry. Transfer to your largest roasting tin and throw in the lemon and garlic and scatter over the thyme in whole sprigs. Season again with a little salt and pepper, then pour in a good amount of oil. Toss well with your hands, making sure all the potatoes are nicely coated in oil and flavourings. Shake the tray so they are sitting in a single layer. Place in the oven for 40-45 minutes, shaking the pan every 15 minutes until you have lovely, crisp potatoes.

SELYODKA POD SHOUBOY
(DRESSED HERRING SALAD)
Submitted by Irina Yurina, Absolute World Group
Russian Web Developer

INGREDIENTS
- 2 Thick salted herring fish
- 5 potatoes
- 4 carrots
- 4 beets
- 5 eggs
- 1 lb mayonnaise

METHOD
Boil the vegetables in one pot. Boil the eggs about ten minutes, or until they are hard. Peel skin from the herring, and cut them along the spine. Clear all bones out. Cut herring meat into very little pieces and always check for bones.

Take a large dish, and put the herring meat evenly on the bottom. If you like onions, you can put little pieces of onion on the herring. Then spread a thin layer of mayonnaise evenly. Grind potatoes and make them the next layer on top of the herring. Spread mayonnaise. Use a fork to plane the layers. The next layers are carrot, 4 eggs and the beets. Spread the mayonnaise on the beets, and grind the last egg on top. Put the dish in the fridge for an hour. Selyodka Pod Shouboy is usually served as an appetizer.
FRESH SOUTHERN PEACH COBBLER
Submitted by Quetta Locchi, Absolute World Group Special Projects Manager

INGREDIENTS

- 8 fresh peaches - peeled, pitted and sliced into thin wedges
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons corn starch
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces
- ¼ cup boiling water

METHOD

Mix together 3 tablespoons white sugar and 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine peaches, ¼ cup white sugar, ¼ cup brown sugar, ¼ teaspoon cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon juice, and cornstarch. Toss to coat evenly, and pour into a 2 quart baking dish. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine flour, ¼ cup white sugar, ¼ cup brown sugar, baking powder and salt. Blend in butter with your fingertips, or a pastry blender, until mixture resembles coarse meal. Stir in water until just combined.

Remove peaches from oven, and drop spoonfuls of topping over them. Sprinkle entire cobbler with the sugar and cinnamon mixture. Bake until topping is golden, about 30 minutes.
BON APP-ETIT
From restaurant recommender systems to digital recipe collections, there are plenty of apps for both iPhone and Android to keep the budding “foodie” happy. Slightly more interesting, however, is the iOS app known as Matthew Kenney’s Raw Express. Offering more than fifty unique and award-winning food recipes, Raw Express goes further than most rival apps by offering nutritional information and images of over 130 ingredients, along with full-length videos from professional chef Matthew Kenney demonstrating a range of handy hints.

The most interesting thing about the app is the fact that all of the food it shows you how to make is raw. The nutritional benefits of raw food are well known, but for many would-be chefs knowledge of tasty raw recipes don’t go much beyond dips and carrot sticks. As you would hope, this app goes the extra mile: suggesting a range of appetisers, soups, salads, smoothies, entrees and desserts -- all complemented by attractive, full-color photography.

Each recipe is designed to take less than thirty minutes, and there’s even a handy “search by ingredient” function that lets you separate the wheat from the... wheatgrass.

KNOW YOUR SPEAKEASIES
Technologists like to claim that by bringing their products to the masses they are democratising everything from employment to the way we communicate with one another. That’s all well and good, but if there’s one area Know Your Mobile never thought it would find subject to the “democratisation” of technology it is the fiddly and meticulous process of making designer cocktails.

Well, thanks to Jim Meehan and Joseph Schwartz -- creators of the Speakeasy Cocktails app for iOS and Android -- that is no longer true. “During Prohibition, getting a stiff drink required passwords and secret passageways,” the app designers’ sales pitch reveals. “Now two of the world’s top bartenders and leaders in the speakeasy revival ... share their secrets with video tutorials, instructional graphics, and more than 200 recipes, culled from the world’s best.”

Alongside the fact that you constantly feel in good hands with your expert mixologists, it is Speakeasy Cocktails’ ability to pick cocktails from around the globe to supplement the classics that makes this app shine as brightly as it does.
WHERE GEEKS GO TO MEAT

A “smoking gun” is normally considered an admission of guilt. Well, with the PolyScience Smoking Gun the only thing you’ll be guilty of is *ahem* great cooking.

It may not be a true substitute for real cold smoking -- which takes hours or even days to properly flavor food -- but this gadget is perfect for adding a unique smoke infusion flavour without the process and time it usually takes for smoking. The price (between £55 - £60) might be on the steep side, but that’s no more than you’ll be paying for a good, mid-range kitchen knife. And, hey, didn’t The Beatles once sing that happiness is a PolyScience Smoking Gun? Or something similar?

CAN IGRILL IT? YES YOU CAN!

“iGrill is revolutionizing the way we cook & grill today,” reads the company’s enthusiastic sales pitch. Making its case for being among the best multitasking apps around, the iGrill is a Bluetooth-enabled wireless cooking thermometer that lets you pay attention to your dinner guests while your food is sizzling away on the barbecue.

To use the iGrill, simply insert the supplied probe into your steak as it cooks and then take advantage of the tool’s 200 feet range (around 60 meters) to go and do something else, while checking your iOS or Android device to monitor temperature. When it’s cooked (measured in both time and optimum temperature) your phone will alert you that food is ready to eat.

What could be better than that?
The grand holiday occasion for all Russian people is the New Year! The New Year is the most important holiday of the year. The Russian celebration starts well in advance of the 1st of January and continues over the next ten days. These days are known as our Christmas Holidays. The New Year’s festivities finish on January 14, when all Russians celebrate the last holiday in January. Russians refer to this day as the “Old New Year.”

On New Year’s Eve, all Russian families put up a Christmas tree in their homes. All of the television channels show classic holiday movies such as “An Irony of Fate” or “Carnival Night.” On this night, it’s safe to say that the entire country cooks the traditional...
Russian dishes of jellied minced meat, jellied fish, Russian salad, and meat dumplings.

Some families celebrate the upcoming New Year in restaurants, but the majority of Russian people celebrate at home. New Year in Russia is a family holiday. At 12 o’clock midnight, the Kremlin chimes, people make wishes, drink champagne, and present a gift to their family or loved ones.

The following day, most Russian people go to visit their friends and their next of kin. Many families enjoy skiing and ice skating, or indulging in the Russian baths.

For children, this is an exciting time as many special events are arranged. A tree known as an “Elki” is set up. It’s referred to as a New Year tree, but is similar to a Christmas tree. Ded Moroz, better known as the Russian Santa Claus, also makes an appearance. Children sing, play, dance in a circle around the tree, and receive a mountain of gifts. Sweet gifts of candies, apples and tangerines are especially popular with the children.

Happy Russian New Year from all of us at the Absolute World Group.
MEXICO

Jungles & deserts, teeming cities, one-street pueblos, fiesta fireworks: Mexico conjures up so many contradictory images. One thing for certain is that no preconceptions will ever live up to the reality.

From the southern jungles to the smoking, snowcapped volcanoes and the cactus-dotted northern deserts, all surrounded by 10,000km of coast strung with sandy beaches and wildlife-rich lagoons, Mexico is an endless adventure for the senses. A climate that ranges from temperate to hot almost everywhere makes for a life spent largely in the open air.

Take it easy by lying on a beach, dining al fresco or strolling the streets of some pretty town, or get out and snorkel warm Caribbean reefs, hike mountain cloud forests or take a boat in search of dolphins or whales.

Travel in Mexico is what you make it and the country caters to all types of voyager. Stay in pampered resorts, budget beach huts or colonial mansions. Eat cutting-edge fusion food in chic gourmet restaurants or abuela’s (grandmother’s) recipes at a busy market comedor (food stall). Getting from A to B is easy thanks to comfortable buses that run almost anywhere and an extensive domestic flight network. Alternatively, try renting a car. Mexico has some excellent roads, and outside the cities traffic is mostly light.

SOUTH AFRICA

Every country in the world displays some diversity, but South Africa, stretching from the hippos in the Limpopo River to the penguins waddling on the Cape, takes some beating.

It befits its position at the southern end of the world’s most epic continent, with more types of terrain than photographers can shake their zoom lens at. There’s the deserted Kalahari, Namakwa’s springtime symphony of wildflowers, iconic Table Mountain and Cape Point, Kruger National Park’s wildlife-stalked savannah (scene of the famous lion-buffalo-crocodile battle watched more than 40 million times on YouTube) and, running through the east of the country and into Lesotho, the Drakensberg. KwaZulu-Natal’s Isimangaliso Wetland Park alone has five distinct ecosystems, attracting both zebras and dolphins.
If you’re interested in another kind of wildlife, hit the nightclubs on Cape Town’s jumping Long St or sample African homebrew in a township shebeen (unlicensed bar). When it’s time to reflect on it all, do it over seafood on the Garden Route, curry in Durban’s Indian Area, a sizzling Cape Malay dish, or a braai (barbecue) in the wilderness – accompanied by a bottle of pinotage produced by the oldest wine industry outside.

South Africans are some of the most upbeat, welcoming and humorous folk you’ll encounter anywhere, from farmers in the rural north who tell you to drive safely on those dirt roads, to Khayelitsha kids who wish you molo (‘good morning’ in Xhosa).

FLORIDA

Ever since Ponce de León, Florida has cast a sensual spell over travelers, and its surreal landscape, heavenly beaches and prehistoric beasts still quicken the pulse and inflame the imagination.

Maybe there’s no mystery to what makes the Florida peninsula so intoxicating. Beaches as fine and sweet as powdered sugar, warm teal waters, rustling mangroves: all conspire to melt our workaday selves. We come to Florida to be soothed, to let go - of worries and winter, of inhibitions and reality. For many, it’s merely the desire for an indulgent beachy getaway of naps, swimming, seafood and rosy sunsets. Others seek the more exciting hedonism of South Beach, Spring Break and Key West. Still more hope to lose themselves within the perfected phantasmagorical realms of Walt Disney World and Orlando’s theme parks. As for Ponce, he traipsed the peninsula seeking mermaids and the legendary fountain of youth, and in a thousand and one ways, Florida still nurtures these alluring, ever-hopeful fantasies.

In the end, Florida promises escape - whether into the Magic Kingdom, into the swamp, into status-drenched excess, or merely into the calm turquoise ocean that surrounds you on nearly every side.

BALI

Bali is like no other destination in the world. Its rich culture plays out at all levels of life, from the exquisite flower-petal offerings placed everywhere to the processions of joyfully garbed locals, shutting down major roads as they march to one of the myriad temple ceremonies, to the other-worldly traditional music and dance performed island-wide.

Yes, Bali has beaches, surfing, diving, and resorts great and small, but it’s the essence of Bali - and the Balinese - that makes it so much more than just a fun-in-the-sun retreat. It is possible to take the cliché of the smiling Balinese too far, but in reality, the inhabitants of this small island are indeed a generous, genuinely warm people. There’s also a fun, sly sense of humour behind the smiles. Upon seeing a bald tourist, many locals exclaim ‘bung ujan,’ which means today’s rain is cancelled - it’s their way of saying that the hairless head is like a clear sky.

On Bali you can lose yourself in the chaos of Kuta or the sybaritic pleasures of Seminyak and Kerobokan, surf wild beaches in the south or just hang-out on Nusa Lembongan. You can go family friendly in Sanur or savour a lavish getaway on the Bukit Peninsula. Ubud is the heart of Bali, a place where the spirit and culture of the island are most accessible. It shares the island’s most beautiful rice fields and ancient monuments with east and west Bali. The middle of Bali is dominated by the dramatic volcanoes of the central mountains as well as hillside temples such as Pura Luhur Batukau (one of the island’s 20,000). North and west Bali are thinly populated but have diving and surfing that make any journey worthwhile.

SCOTLAND

As an old Scots saying has it, ‘guid gear comes in sma’ bouk’ (good things come in small packages). And despite its small size, Scotland certainly has many treasures crammed into its compact territory. There’s something for all tastes. For the history buff, few cities compare with Edinburgh and Glasgow,
for the hungry, try haggis if you must but don’t miss the Aberdeen Angus beef or smoked salmon from Dumfries & Galloway or, for the thirsty, the peerless malt whiskies of the Isle of Islay or Oban await. There is wild mountain scenery of the Highlands & Northern Islands and cold, sparkling seas washing against the Outer Hebrides. Wildlife watchers will find otters, eagles, whales and dolphins, while hill walkers have almost 300 Munros to bag.

There’s turbulent history and fascinating genealogy, castles and country pubs, canoeing and caber-tossing, golfing and fishing and all-round good craic (lively conversation).

Although an integral part of Great Britain since 1707, Scotland has maintained a separate and distinct identity throughout the last 300 years. The return of a devolved Scottish parliament to Edinburgh in 1999 marked a growing confidence and sense of pride in the nation’s achievements.

**CANADA**

The globe’s second-biggest country has an endless variety of landscapes. Spiky mountains, glinting glaciers, spectral rainforests, wheat-waving prairies – they’re all here, spread across six time zones. Expect wave-bashed beaches, too. With the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic Oceans gnashing on three sides, Canada has a coastline that’d reach halfway to the moon, if stretched out.

It’s the backdrop for plenty of ‘ah’-inspiring moments and the playground for a big provincial menagerie. We mean big as in polar bears, grizzly bears, whales and everyone’s favorite, the ballerina-legged moose. You’re pretty much guaranteed to see one of these behemoths when you leave the city behind.

Winter or summer, grand adventures lurk throughout Canada. Whether it’s snowboarding Whistler’s mountains, surfing Nova Scotia’s swell, hiking Newfoundland’s Appalachian Trail or kayaking the Northwest Territories’ white-frothed South Nahanni River, outfitters will help you gear up for it. Gentler adventures abound, too, like strolling Vancouver’s Stanley Park seawall, swimming off Prince Edward Island’s (PEI) pink-sand beaches, or ice skating Ottawa’s Rideau Canal. Before you know it, you’ll be zipping up the fleece and heeding the call to action (and maybe having a go at dog-sledding, walleye fishing, snow-kiting).

Canada is a local food smorgasbord. If you grazed from east to west across the country, you’d fill your plate like this: lobster with a dab of melted butter in the Atlantic provinces, poutine (golden fries soaked in gravy and cheese curds) in Québec, a bulging slice of berry pie in the Prairies and wild salmon and velvety scallops in British Columbia (BC). It’s best to leave the belt at home.

**SPAIN**

Passionate, sophisticated and devoted to living the good life, Spain is at once a stereotype come to life and a country more diverse than you ever imagined. Spain’s diverse landscapes stir the soul. The Pyrenees and the Picos de Europa are as beautiful as any mountain range on the continent, while the snowcapped Sierra Nevada rises up improbably from the sun-baked plains of Andalucía; these are hiking destinations of the highest order. The wildly beautiful cliffs of Spain’s Atlantic northwest are the scene for some of Europe’s most spectacular drives, even as the charming coves of the Mediterranean are still the continent’s summer destination.
of choice; despite decades of overdevelopment, numerous unspoiled corners remain. And everywhere you go, villages of timeless beauty perch on hilltops, huddle in valleys and cling to coastal outcrops as tiny but resilient outposts of Old Spain. Spend as long as you can in places like these.

Food and wine are national obsessions in Spain, and with good reason. Yes, there’s paella, tapas, jamón and olive oil in abundance, but these are merely the best-known ingredients of a national cuisine that continues to take the world by storm. The touchstones of Spanish cooking are deceptively simple: incalculable variety, strong traditions of recipes handed down through the generations, and an innate willingness to experiment and see what comes out of the kitchen-laboratory.

You may experience the best meal ever over tapas in an earthy bar where everyone’s shouting, or over a meal prepared by a celebrity chef in the refined surrounds of a Michelin-starred restaurant. Either way, the breadth of gastronomic experience that awaits you is breathtaking.

Spain’s story is told with endless creativity through its arts and architecture. Poignantly windswept Roman ruins, cathedrals of rare power and incomparable jewels of Islamic architecture speak of a country where the great civilisations of history have always risen, fallen and left behind their indelible mark. More recently, what other country could produce such rebellious and relentlessly creative spirits as Salvador Dalí, Pablo Picasso and Antoni Gaudi and place them front and centre in public life? Here, grand monuments to the past coexist alongside architectural creations of such daring that it becomes clear that Spain’s future will be every bit as original as its past. For all such talk, this is a country that lives very much in the present. Perhaps you’ll sense it along a crowded postmidnight street when all the world has come out to play. Or maybe that moment will come when a flamenco performer touches something deep in your soul. Whenever it happens, you’ll find yourself nodding in recognition: this is Spain.

PORTUGAL

Medieval castles, cobbledstone villages, captivating cities and golden-sand beaches: the Portugal experience can mean many things. History, great food and wine, idyllic scenery and blazing nightlife are just the beginning.

Celts, Romans, Visigoths, Moors and Christians all left their mark on the Iberian nation. Exploring Portugal means coming face to face with the great mysteries of the past. You can gaze upon 20,000-year-old stone carvings in the Vila Nova de Foz Côa, watch the sunset over mysterious megaliths outside Évora or lose yourself in the elaborate corridors of Unesco World Heritage Sites in Tomar, Belém, Alcobaça or Batalha. You can pack an itinerary visiting palaces set above mist-covered woodlands, craggy cliff-top castles and stunningly preserved medieval town centres.

Outside the cities, Portugal’s beauty unfolds in all its startling variety. You can overnight in converted hilltop castles and historic manors fronting vineyards and olive groves, go hiking amid the granite peaks of Parque Nacional da Peneda-Gerês or take in the pristine scenery and historic villages of the little-explored Beiras. Over 800km of coast offer more places to soak up the splendour. You can gaze out over dramatic end-of-the-world cliffs, surf stellar breaks off dune-covered beaches or laze peacefully on sandy islands fronting calm blue seas. You’ll find dolphin watching in the lush Sado Estuary, boating and kayaking along the meandering Rio Guadiana and memorable walks and bike rides all across the country.

Just imagine having the choice of dozens of desirable locations worldwide, vacation resorts set overlooking the most beautiful beaches, or amongst majestic mountain landscapes. With Absolute Destinations each resort will become a home away from home just waiting for you. Absolute Destinations offers the opportunity to visit these best in travel destinations. For more information, please visit www.absolute-destinations.com.
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The Beach Samui is a multi award winning and consciously developed five star boutique resort nestled on one of Asia’s most idyllic beaches in the tiny fishing village of Thong Krut, southern Koh Samui, Thailand.

Designed by the world renowned Yoo team, brought to you by the Absolute World Group and now proudly part of the prestigious Design Hotels worldwide collective. A limited number of The Beach Samui’s one and two bedroom suites are available to own, ahead of the much anticipated resort opening in 2014.
HOLIDAY SMARTER, HOLIDAY FITTER

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS
7 TIPS TO MAKE THEM STICK

THE NEW YEAR IS UPON US AND SO IS THE SEASON FOR RESOLUTIONS. ARE YOU A BIG BELIEVER IN THE POWER OF SMALL CHANGES TO MAKE US HAPPIER? MAKING RESOLUTIONS IS FUN AND EASY; KEEPING THEM IS TOUGH. AFTER ALL, 24% OF PEOPLE FAIL ON THEIR RESOLUTION EACH YEAR. CHECK OUT THESE TIPS TO STICK TO YOUR RESOLUTIONS IN THE UPCOMING YEAR.

1. BE SPECIFIC
People often make abstract resolutions: “Be more optimistic,” “Find more joy in life,” “Aim high.” Instead, look for a specific, measurable action. “Distract myself with fun music when I’m feeling gloomy,” “Watch at least one movie each week,” “Buy a plant for my desk” are resolutions that will carry you toward those abstract goals.

According to the Journal of Clinical Psychology, the top resolutions often include resolutions such as “Enjoy life to the fullest” and “Staying fit and healthy.” What does this mean, exactly? Monday morning, what will you do differently?

2. WRITE IT DOWN
Writing down your resolutions keeps them fresh in your head. Committing pen to paper will help make your resolutions more tangible.

3. REVIEW YOUR RESOLUTION CONSTANTLY
If your resolution is buzzing through your head, it’s easier to stick to it.

4. HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE
Accountability is the secret to sticking to resolutions. That’s why groups like AA and Weight Watchers are effective. There are many ways to hold yourself accountable; for example, keep a Resolutions Chart. You might hire a trainer or exchange daily updates with a friend. Accountability is one reason that #1 is so important. If your resolution is too vague, it’s hard
to measure whether you’re keeping it. A resolution to “Eat healthier” is harder to track than “Eat salad for lunch three times a week.”

If you have an especially tough time keeping resolutions, try these strategies:

5. CONSIDER MAKING PLEASANT RESOLUTIONS

We can make our lives happier in many ways. If you’ve been trying to get yourself to do something challenging, with no success, try resolving to “Go to more movies,” “Read more,” or whatever resolutions you’d find fun to keep. Seeing more movies might make it easier to keep going to the gym. It’s a Secret of Adulthood: If you want to ask a lot from yourself, it helps to give a lot to yourself.

6. CONSIDER GIVING UP A RESOLUTION

If you keep making and breaking a resolution, consider whether you should relinquish it entirely. Put your energy toward changes that are both realistic and helpful. Don’t let an unfulfilled resolution to lose twenty pounds or to overhaul your overgrown yard block you from making other, smaller resolutions that might give you a big happiness boost.

7. KEEP YOUR RESOLUTION EVERY DAY

Strangely, it’s often easier to do something every day (exercise, post to a blog, deal with the mail, do laundry) than every few days.
HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRAVEL IS TAKING OFF IN A BIG WAY, AND MOVING BEYOND ITS NICHE AND BEING INCORPORATED INTO A LARGER OVERALL TRAVEL ECOSYSTEM, ESPECIALLY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. WELLNESS TOURISM WORLDWIDE, A WELLNESS TRAVEL RESEARCH AND PROMOTION BUSINESS, HAS COME OUT WITH ITS ATTEMPT AT THE TOP TRENDS IN WELLNESS TRAVEL FOR 2014. THIS FORECAST WILL ENCOURAGE BUSINESSES AND CONSUMERS TO THINK OF VACATION TRAVEL IN NEW WAYS, AND WE ARE CERTAINLY EXCITED TO CAPTURE MUCH OF THESE TRENDS IN OUR RESORTS IN THE COMING YEARS.

MIND MATTERS
Consumers have caught on to mindful vacations that offer mental restoration through meditation, yoga, and journaling.

THE RISE OF WELLNESS TRAVEL AGENTS
Wellness tourism has created a new niche for travel agents to grow or expand their business.

LA LOCAL VITA
Consumers have developed a deeper appreciation for locally relevant and authentic experiences with an emphasis on living “la local vita” (the local life), true also of larger trends in travel.

BREAKING BREAD WITH WELLNESS
Food tourism is a big trend intersecting with wellness travel: food tours, cooking classes, agriculture and farm-to-table experiences.
**VACATION RX**
Physicians are now prescribing vacations as an antidote from stress. Doctor’s orders for physical activity in parks are also being written to help combat obesity and diabetes in children.

**SLOW TRAVEL**
Slow travel advocates changing the pace in order to sip, savor and revel in the vacation experience.

**AFFLUENT & ALTRUISITC**
Affluent travelers value experiences connecting them to charitable causes and local communities. Volunteering on vacation has become increasingly popular.

**BURGEONING SECONDARY WELLNESS MARKET**
There is a large segment of travelers who may not opt for wellness retreats or tours but are committed to maintaining their healthy lifestyle on the road. Air transit and hotels are investing resources to attract these guests that are both business and leisure travelers.

Eager to shake the image of pampering for the affluent, spas are repacking and rebranding as wellness providers to attract a larger market.
KANLAYA YODKAEW has been with the Absolute World Group for six years. Originally from Trang province in the southern part of Thailand, she enjoys doing the best she can everyday to ensure the happiness of our clients. Khun Kung expresses that the most rewarding part of her job has been to work & deal with various types of people. In her spare time, Khun Kung enjoys listening to music and watching movies. Her must-see site for clients to visit in Phuket is the Old Town District.

FAIS DADA has been with the Absolute World Group for three and half years. Born and raised in Phuket, he handles reservations for Thai members. The best part of his day is knowing he’s made clients happy and he’s been helpful answering questions regarding their stay. Khun Far enjoys spending time with his family, and a perfect evening for him is to stay in and enjoy dinner with them. His must-see sites in Phuket are Nai Harn Beach in the southern part of the island, and Laem Singh Beach in the Northern part of the island.

CHANG JUNG-CHEN, otherwise known as CONNIE, is our Taiwanese Reservations Officer. With the company for three years, Connie is at her happiest when she knows members are satisfied with her service. She handles many tasks on a daily basis, and enjoys her job very much. When she finds time to relax, Connie enjoys reading books. Her must-see site is just off of Phuket. It’s a quaint little island called Khai Island, and she recommends all of our members to take a day excursion to visit this island.

OUR RESERVATIONS OFFICERS, BASED IN PHUKET, ARE COMMITTED TO OFFERING YOU THE BEST SERVICE IN ENGLISH, THAI, FINNISH, SCANDINAVIAN, FRENCH, GERMAN, FARSI AND MANDARIN. OUR RESERVATIONS OFFICERS ARE EAGER TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR RESERVATIONS OR GIVE YOU FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING LOCAL BOOKINGS. THEY ARE ALSO KEEN TO GIVE YOU THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE “MUST-SEE” SITES OF PHUKET.
KAISA ANNELI MERILAINEN is our Finnish Reservations Officer. Better known as Kaisa, she’s worked for the Absolute World Group for four years. Kaisa handles the reservations for Finnish and Scandinavian members, and offers them all of the help and explanations that they need. She finds it most rewarding when members are happy and content with their accommodations and send emails of thanks in return. Kaisa’s hobbies include reading, walking and swimming and she also enjoys watching Finnish TV via the Internet. Kaisa’s must-see sites in Phuket include The Big Buddha and sunset at Promthep Cape.

KETSARAPORN YAHATTA is a Phuket native who started working with the Absolute World Group this year. Fluent in Mandarin, Khun Bewwy is our Chinese Reservations Agent. Khun Bewwy is unique in the fact that she feels like she is a Thai Ambassador. She enjoys promoting her country and her hometown of Phuket, and is confident that she can help visitors with any problems or questions that may arise during their holiday here with us. In her spare time, Khun Bewwy enjoys baking and traveling. Her must-see site in Phuket is without a doubt Promthep Cape, where she feels our members will enjoy the landscape and beautiful sunset.

KET SARAPORN YAHATTA

VANNATH MASON, known as Vanessa, was born in Cambodia, and has been working for the Absolute World Group for more than four years. She came to the company because she valued its good business reputation. Vanessa’s daily tasks are making sure members are satisfied with their holiday bookings and answering any enquiries regarding memberships. Vanessa feels happy when she is able to sort out member’s bookings, and the most rewarding part of her job is when she receives emails from members saying thank you for helping with their holiday bookings, or members who express that they’ve had a fantastic holiday. In her free time, Vanessa enjoys spending family time with her husband and young daughter as well as keeping fit. She is also an avid baker. Her must-see sites in Phuket include the gorgeous beaches of Karon & Kata.

VANNA THAV MA SUN

CHUTHATIP NUNOI is our E-Marketing Manager. A native of Trang province in southern Thailand, Khun Au has been with the Absolute World Group for nearly six years. Her task load is heavy having to deal with wholesalers and online agencies, but you will never hear her complain. She enjoys her work immensely, and is thankful for the good relationship she maintains with her colleagues. Khun Au says her position with the Absolute World Group is an enjoyable part of her life. In her spare time, Khun Au likes to sing karaoke and go shopping. She also makes handmade crafts and keeps up with entertainment and travel news. Her must-see site in Phuket is Promthep Cape. Khun Au gushes that the views are beautiful and that it’s the best place to see the sunset.

CHUTHATIP NUNOI

December 2013
ENJOYING YOUR BEACH VACATION
10 GREAT TIPS

This holiday season, don’t think of your family beach vacation as just a time to swim. That sun-drenched stretch of sand is a giant playground where your children can learn about nature, play games, and do craft projects that will let them bring home mementos of your fun-filled days together. No expensive equipment is needed to embark on these ten activities. They’re nice and simple. So put on your bathing suit, make sure you’re all wearing plenty of sunscreen, and get set to have a fun day in the sun.

1. PHOTOGRAPH BEACH TREASURES

Give each child his own disposable camera for the day and let him take pictures of whatever he wants. The caveat: only one camera per youngster. Kids will learn patience by waiting for good photo moments. Explain that it’s important not to let sand get into the camera and that it should be kept in a plastic bag in your tote when not in use. Later, develop the pictures and encourage your photographers to arrange their best shots in a special photo album or scrapbook. This is a great way to preserve happy memories!

2. CONSTRUCT A SUN SHADE

This is an easy way to teach about the sun’s trajectory. You need four long, pointed sticks or bamboo poles from a home-and-garden center, large rubber bands, markers, and a sheet. Before heading out, let your kids decorate the sheet with colorful designs. At the beach, measure off an area a few inches shorter on all sides than the sheet. Drive the sticks into the sand where you have marked off the corners. Knot a corner of the sheet around each pole and secure the knots with rubber bands. Once your sun shade is in place, youngsters can learn about shadows during the course of a day.

3. EXPLORE A TIDAL POOL

Just after high tide, when the water recedes and pools up at the ocean’s edge, is the best time for this educational observation. Look for small sea life like starfish, snails, and other mollusks. Think of tidal pools as mini-communities filled with living creatures that should be treated with respect. Ask your child what he sees, what different roles these organisms might play in that little community, and how he thinks they manage to stay put when the tide goes out. Starfish, for instance, have rows of small, sucker-like projections and attach themselves to rocks. You may want to find a library book on the subject and read it together.

4. DESIGN A “ZEN” SANDBOX

Take a sturdy box, even a shoebox works well, to the beach with you. Fill it with clean sand, spread out evenly. Kids can collect shells and stones and use them to make a garden. They can design different groupings by maybe arranging pretty shells in one section of the box, colorful stones in another, and so forth. It’s relaxing to look at and doesn’t need to be watered!
5. DECORATE A KITE
You’ll need: wooden dowels (one-quarter inch or less in diameter), found at hardware and art-supply stores; a large brown paper shopping bag, cut open and flattened, or colored paper; markers or stamps and an ink pad; a stapler; crepe paper; and string. Make two lengths of dowel, one longer than the other, by scoring them with a knife and then breaking them on the cut line. The lengths depend on how big a kite you want: we suggest dowels of 36 and 18 inches. To form a cross, cut a groove in one dowel where the two overlap. Lay the other dowel in the groove; secure with a metal twist-tie (the kind that come with some garbage bags). Lay the cross on top of the paper. Mark off a diamond shape by drawing lines connecting the ends of the dowels; then add about one inch all around. Cut out the shape. Place the cross on the paper and fold the edges over about one inch; staple the edges. Staple the paper to the dowels. Let your child decorate the kite. Cut strips of crepe paper and staple to the kite for a tail. Tie string securely where the dowels cross and have a contest for the highest flying kite or the one that stays up the longest.

6. CREATE A SHELL NECKLACE
You’ll need smallish shells and colorful dental floss. Look for shells that have a tiny hole at one end so that you won’t have to drill holes in them. Let kids string the shells onto a length of floss, tying a knot through the hole on each one to secure it in place. Tie the ends together. Want to get fancy? Kids can paint the shells before stringing them. Or if you have colorful, mini-pom-poms or large beads on hand, encourage your budding jewelry designer to alternate them with the shells.

7. MAKE A RECORDING OF THE WAVES
The best time for this is when the waves are noisy, so go before a storm or during high tide. Have your child stand close to, but still a safe distance from, the water’s edge. Utilizing the recording device on any smartphone, hold the phone up to the sea. Play the recorded masterpiece at night and don’t be surprised when the relaxing, rhythmic sounds help your children fall right to sleep!

8. PLAY TIC-TAC-TOE IN “WAVE TIME”
You need two sticks and a level stretch of wet sand where, for example, every tenth wave washes over it. Step one: Draw a giant tic-tac-toe board in the sand by making two vertical lines crossed by two horizontal lines. Step two: One player draws “X’s,” the other “O’s.” Take turns making the letters on the board -- the first person to get three X’s or O’s in a line (vertically, horizontally, or diagonally) wins. Time is of the essence. You must finish the game before it gets washed away by the next wave!

9. CRAFT A DRIFTWOOD BOAT
Find some of your materials at the beach: driftwood, flat stones, reeds, and sticks. Bring other supplies: string or wire and a plastic bag. First, sandwich a stone (the keel) between two long pieces of wood (the hull). It should be in the center and protrude downward. Sandwich a smaller stone (the rudder) an inch from one end of the hull. Place a large stick (the mast) between the two stones, sticking upward. Tie all of this together tightly with string. To balance the boat, tie one end of another large stick to the hull at the base of the mast at a 90 degree angle. At the other end of this stick, tie a piece of wood parallel to the hull. Punch holes in a plastic bag and weave a thin stick through the holes. Tie the top and bottom of the sail to the mast and the top of the mast to each end of the hull. Now your boat is ready to sail.

10. HAVE A SCAVENGER HUNT
Give each child a bucket with a camera like the Polaroid i-Zone or the OneStep Express and a list of things to find. Include items that can be placed in the bucket, like sea glass, shells, and stones. But for a twist, add some things the kids can’t take with them -- a red beach umbrella or two girls in blue bathing suits. The scavengers use the camera to take pictures of these items to complete the list. The first one to collect all the elements and arrive back at home base (your beach blanket!) wins. Have the older kids “buddy up” with younger ones; little players should have parents accompany them on their search.
PHOTO POSTCARDS
5 FREE FANTASTIC APPS

WRITING AND SENDING POSTCARDS IS A TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY RITUAL AND, THANKS TO THE WONDERS OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY, CAN COST YOU NO MORE THAN A LITTLE TIME AND ENERGY. USE YOUR OWN IPHONE PHOTOS WITH ONE OF THESE FABULOUS, FREE APPS THAT CREATES ELECTRONIC POSTCARDS YOU CAN EMAIL. WHILE YOUR DEAR OLD GRANDMOTHER MAY STILL PREFER A CARD OF THE PAPER VARIETY, NEXT TIME YOU’RE ON YOUR ABSOLUTE HOLIDAY, DROP A LINE TO YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND COLLEAGUES USING ONE OF THESE IPHONE APPS.

SODASNAP
SodaSnap offers a simple app interface that matches the simplicity of the final product. To get started, choose an image. You can either select a photo from your iPhone’s camera roll, snap a pic of your surroundings, or use your location.
Using your location brings up the maps app from which you can screenshot. This doesn’t make the most compelling picture postcard, but it may be a useful tool for meetings and invitations.
Once you’re happy with your image, you can add text and hit the share button. The way the app is designed, it’s pretty much what you see is what you get, so you’ll have a good idea of what the recipient will see in the inbox. As well as email, there are options to share to Twitter and Facebook.

PHOTOCARDS
The Photocards app allows you to snap a pic or grab one from your camera roll. When you’ve sized the photo to fit the frame, you can choose a background.
The available backgrounds display classic stock photography — the sky, greenery, sand, landscapes, etc. — but the pleasant surprise is that the images are actually decent quality. The not-so-pleasant surprise is that you have to pay for some of them.
With your background and picture in place, it’s just a matter of penning a few lines before emailing your creation.
Montager is a little different because it acts as more of a photography tool. However, it lets you get creative with your pics. It offers a number of templates that allow you to juxtapose three images into a mini-montage. You simply double tap the empty space you want to fill, and then create your triptych either on-the-fly with photos taken with the iPhone’s camera, or from pics saved to the camera roll.

Although there’s no built in text options, you can email from within the app, so add your message there.

Current Postcards

Once you’ve snapped a photo or grabbed one from your camera roll, the Current Postcards app lets you select a font before opening the theme gallery.

Themes categories include Birthday, Special Events, Holidays, Everyday or Just For Fun. While we’d struggle to pick a theme from most of the clipart-esque options, the simple postcard in the “Everyday” category is quite classic.

You can send your Current Postcards creations via email or post to Facebook.

Postino

Creating a postcard with the Postino app is a four-step process. First upload a photo from your camera roll or capture one anew with your iPhone.

Next write the message, and then you’re onto the really fun step — adding your signature.

You can scrawl your John Hancock on your iPhone screen with your finger. Once you’ve added that personal touch, email your postcard.
INDISPENSABLE APPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

IF THE THOUGHT OF THE HOLIDAYS SENDS YOU INTO PANIC MODE, DON’T WORRY! YOUR SMARTPHONE IS HERE TO HELP. WHETHER YOU NEED INSPIRATION, ORGANIZATION OR JUST A WAY TO KEEP YOUR FINANCES IN CHECK, HERE ARE SEVEN FANTASTIC APPS TO HELP GET YOU THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS.

WUNDERLIST
Make your list and check it twice with this simple to-do list app. One great feature of Wunderlist is the ability to share and collaborate on your lists with others, so you can easily share gift lists with relatives. Stay organized all holiday season by making lists for gift giving, meal planning, and budgeting.

CHRISTMAS RADIO
Rock around the Christmas tree all year long with this music app that plays nothing but Christmas music. While this may sound like a nightmare to some, it’s hard not to get into the Christmas spirit while you’re tuned in to Christmas Radio. If you’re having a holiday party, you won’t need to play DJ all night when you can choose from the app’s 40 different holiday music stations.

PICKIE GIFTS
Part personal investigator and part personal shopper, Pickie Gifts connects with your Facebook account and then spies on your friends (but in a good way). The app combs through your friends’ Facebook likes and interests to come up with personalized gift ideas. If you have a lot of friends and family members who are hard to shop for, then this is the app for you.
**SHOPADVISOR**

Bargain hunters will love this app which tells you when to buy for the lowest possible price. You let the app know which items you’re looking to buy, and it alerts you when the price drops. ShopAdvisor also tells you which nearby stores have the items you are watching and at which price, so you can run out and make a purchase when the price is right. This can also tell you which credit cards will give you the most reward points for purchasing a certain item.

**AMAZON**

Yes, you can simply use this app to shop on Amazon. But the real appeal of this app is the price check feature, which allows you to scan the barcode of any item and then look up the price, and potentially purchase it, on Amazon. Just be discreet about this one if you use it in a retail store!

**PINTEREST**

Pinterest is the perfect tool for creating inspiration boards with holiday gift, food and decor ideas. You can even make your boards private so your friends can’t see their gifts. Pinterest is also a great way to share wish lists with others what you or your kids want for the holidays.

**PRO PARTY PLANNER**

Whether you’re hosting an intimate Christmas dinner or throwing a massive holiday party, Pro Party Planner can keep all of your party planning needs in check. You can track your guests, set your budget, arrange seating charts and delegate tasks to others. This app is ideal if you’re hosting a party with other people, since you can sync the party plans across multiple devices.
In early November 2013, an exceptionally powerful tropical cyclone ravaged parts of South East Asia, in particular the Philippines. The deadliest Philippine typhoon on record, Typhoon Haiyan killed thousands upon landfall.

Amid the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, number of aid agencies, non-profits and organizations realized just how difficult it would be getting to those in need. All of us at Absolute World Group knew that we needed to do something.

The Absolute World Group supported the Philippines Disaster Relief donation scheme, by placing a series of Donation Boxes in all our Absolute Resorts & Hotels Reception Areas and our restaurants the Blue Mango, Absolute Sea Pearl Restaurant & Climax.

It was overwhelming to see the monetary support donated by our staff and guests alike. The donation boxes were available until 5 December 2013. All revenues collected and the total donation were submitted in honour of His Majesty The King’s birthday to the UNICEF appeal.
We would like to extend the gift of holidays to our Members this Christmas season by offering the chance to visit one of our resorts in Thailand. If you have not been back to Thailand since 2012 we would like to give you the chance to experience one of our stunning new resorts and see just how much we have developed.

With this in mind please accept our gift of one week accommodation and American breakfast at one of our resorts in Phuket or Koh Samui for 2 adults between March to November 2014.

All we ask to secure your booking and to cover administration is a nominal reservation fee of just 99$.

Our Global Reservations Team are awaiting your call so we can whisk you away on an extended Christmas holiday in 2014!

FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE OUR MEMBER SERVICES TEAMS CAN BE CONTACTED ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING LOCAL RATE NUMBERS:

- Australia: +61 280 734 452
- China: +86 400 898 0898
- Finland: +35 894 2704 142
- France: +33 176 773 993
- Germany: +49 692 222 1557
- Russia: +7 499 795 7549
- South Africa: +27 2130 01943
- Thailand: +66 762 92525
- UK: +44 203 642 2203
- USA: +1 646 564 654

Merry Christmas!
OVER 25,000 HAPPY FAMILIES HOLIDAY WITH US

“The restaurant here is amazing. The food is wonderful!”
Leslie and John Oorschot, New Zealand
Absolute Fractionals owners since 2010

“The quality of their accommodation is second to none. You couldn’t possibly be disappointed.”
Debra Barclay, Australia
Absolute Destinations owner since 2013

“Everything about this place is magnificent (Absolute Twin Sands). That’s why it’s my favorite.”
Caroline Mitchell and Adrian Longo, Australia
Absolute Destinations owners since 2005

ARE YOU THE NEXT ABSOLUTE STAR AMBASSADOR?

Whether you want to shout about your latest holiday adventure, sing the praises of our resort staff, share your tips for the perfect restaurant or simply talk about your Absolute experience we invite you to become an Absolute Ambassador and star in our online series. All Ambassadors will be rewarded with a special travel gift to make it worthwhile and of course you will be looked after whilst in resort by our fantastic production team.

If you are interested in being our next online video star, please just drop us an email at producer@absoluteworld.net.

Visit our Vimeo channel to see what your fellow owners and members are saying...

www.vimeo.com/absoluteworld
We hope you have enjoyed your new Member magazine and welcome any feedback. Let us know what you would like to see by sending your thoughts to: inspired@absoluteworld.net