

## A Surprising Side of Atlanta: Celebrities and Aficionados Unite

I had a business trip to Atlanta a few weeks ago and the thought of going to Atlanta was anything but inspiring. Well, that was until I got there. As I was pulling up to the St. Regis in Buckhead (the Beverly Hills of the South), Jennifer Aniston was leaving. Then, as I was checking in, Cindy Crawford was getting into the elevator. Wow, maybe Atlanta is cool after all!

I was trying to figure out what made this hotel and city a magnet for the rich and famous, then I took a peek at the St. Regis list of Aficionado programs. These are one-of-a-kind programs created by the hotel for guests who want more than a mint on their pillow. Thinking about it, these programs would be ideal gifts for those on your list that are, well, hard to please. Not that I am hard to please, but Santa, if you're listening, I would really love that Power Trip to Porsche.

Here are a few of the treats that I am sure the stars are indulging in this holiday season:

### **How About Some Fire and Ice with That Sparkle?**

I can just imagine Brad and Angelina enjoying this icy adventure. The courtyard at the hotel is transformed into a winter wonderland -- complete with an ice rink. First a butler will herald the event by performing the signature champagne savoring ritual and lead a Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte (the bubbly of Lauren Bacall, Jackie Onassis, Yves Saint-Laurent, Hubert de Givenchy) toast to open the evening. Then, the Jolie Pitt kids come down with the nanny and the family takes a whirl in a 60-minute private skating session on the Astor Holiday Rink. Whisked back up to the suite, the kids go to sleep while the famous couple sits down to a six-course prix-fixe dinner in the warm glow of candlelight while waiters graciously attend to their every need on skates. Yes, I can see it now.

\$1,500 plus taxes includes dinner, a bottle of champagne, ice-skating and skate rental. A five-day advance reservation is required, based on availability of the Astor Holiday Rink.

### **For the Saber and Champagne Lover:**

Much like a scene from a Francis Ford Coppola movie, all you need for this drama is a rare bottle of Dom Perignon Vintage 1995, a shiny saber, and a connoisseur of cutting. The climactic scene is the sabering of champagne for you and your lucky guest. Dating back to Napoleon, the art of using a champagne saber is one of the most theatrical and exclusive ways to serve sparkling wine. Perfect for all you drama queens who love champagne. The wine director will tutor you in a private sabering lesson and if all goes as planned you'll pop the exalted champagne. Then, they'll present you with the White Gold Jeroboam, a precious combination of Dom Perignon Vintage 1995 and a three-liter bottle dipped entirely in white gold. Yes, there are only four bottles exist in the United States and yours is waiting in Atlanta for you.

\$25,500 plus tax includes one night in deluxe accommodations, private sabering lessons for two, dinner for two at Paces 88 with wine pairings and a presentation of the White Gold Jeroboam of 1995 Dom Perignon.

### **A Holiday With Dali**

Currently, one of the key exhibits at the High Museum in Atlanta is "Dali: The Late Work." Here, the museum docent guides you through a stunning collection of more than 40 paintings and film, sculptures and photographs -- many of which have never been displayed publicly. After this surreal journey, you get to savor a five-course menu with wine pairings at Paces 88 inspired by art, of course.

\$2,100 plus taxes includes a one-night stay in a St. Regis Suite for two with Bentley transfers, private High Museum Dali exhibit tour and Paces 88 dinner. A 14-day advance reservation is required.

### **In Need of Speed?**

Days of Thunder are back and I wanna ride. This trip is like a scene from a Tom Cruz action movie. First, you get whisks away in a 2010 Porsche Panamera to a private helipad, where you'll soar up in the air in a helicopter luxuriously filled with sumptuous gourmet treats from Paces 88 chef de cuisine. After you've been whirled to Birmingham, Alabama, find yourself at the home of the Porsche Sport Driving School, and in the company of those super sexy Porsches. I can just imagine running my fingers along the beautiful wide wheel-arches and rear spoiler of the beautifully sleek 911 Turbo. Why just admire when you can go behind the wheel and receive a day of one-on-one instruction of the car, so you can step on that exhilarating acceleration for yourself? Santa, you got that?

\$12,000 plus taxes is based on a weekend stay in a Superior Room for two with helicopter ride, visit to Porsche Sport Driving School with instruction and gourmet treats. A 45-day advance reservation is required.

### **Steal Away With a Style Icon**

If you have a man who knows more about stocks than style, then this is a great gift for him. Woody Allen could really use this package. Sid Mashburn is the style concierge to consult if you aim to be "clothed and in your right mind." From tailored business wear and sports outfits to dress shoes and luggage, Sid will assess your personality and suit your man up in the right style.

\$2,400 includes one night in a St. Regis Suite, luxury transfer to Sid Mashburn, private consultation, champagne upon arrival and dinner for two in your suite. An advance reservation of seven days is required.

### **How About a Master Class in Glass?**

One of my favorite stops in Atlanta was the Fräbel Glass Studio. Fra Hans-Godo Fräbel's masterpieces are the finest in hand-blown glass design and many famous notables own a piece of his art -- including every American president since Carter and yes, Oprah. An Atlanta fixture since 1968, it is in the celebrated Fräbel Glass Art Studio that his breakthrough "Hammer and Nails" pop art sculpture and Absolut Vodka's cavorting clowns came to life. After a private, in-suite consultation with Fräbel, you'll travel together in a Bentley to a personally-conducted tour of his domain. Examine refined techniques of sandblasting and painting which produce Fräbel's trademark optical illusions, before he designs a glass piece under your commission. Yes, you get to design something with the glass master! Back at the hotel, a copy of Fräbel: Reflections of Glass on Water and a dinner for two in Paces 88.

Starting at \$677 plus taxes includes a 1-night stay in deluxe accommodations, transfers, dinner for two and valet parking. Cost of custom created glass piece not included in package price. A seven-day advance reservation is required.

### **A Behind the Scenes Special**

I admit, when I think of Atlanta, I don't think of culture -- Waffle House, yes, Nutcracker, no. But behold, Atlanta has a thriving performing arts scene, three of the leaders being the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Opera and Atlanta Ballet. Before your trip to the theater, you'll indulge in an intimate dinner for two at Paces 88. Whatever venue you choose, you'll go behind the scenes to tour the theater and visit the company following the performance. In support of the fine arts, 20% of your total hotel bill will be donated to the Orchestra or Ballet. Bravo!

\$1,800 plus taxes is based on a two-night stay in a Superior Room for two with dinner, luxury transfers and two event tickets. A 14-day advance reservation is required.

After my stay in Atlanta I will definitely make it back, and not just for the fried okra and biscuits. Next time, I'll make sure to bring my ice skates, riding gloves and celebrity attitude.