

(ELEGANT RESORTS TIP-ON USA - 04-09429)

HAWAII

Unforgettable Hawaii – the world’s most isolated archipelago – where Polynesian culture meets the American dream 2,500 miles off California’s Pacific coast.

Eight volcanic islands boasting exotic tropical landscapes, endless golden beaches and world-class surfing combine luxurious hospitality with a wealth of leisure experiences.

At once remote – yet magnetically inviting – America’s Aloha state has provided breathtaking backdrops for Hollywood blockbusters such as *Jurassic Park*, *South Pacific* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

MAUNA LANI BAY HOTEL & BUNGLAOWS

This fashionable west-coast oasis on ‘The Big Island’ of Hawaii is home to exclusive bungalows, each with superb ocean-front, mountain or garden views. Endless facilities include two world-class championship golf courses and water-sports of every type.

Further afield, visitors can explore pristine rainforests, deserts, snow-capped mountains and the still-active Kilauea volcano, as well as historic spiritual sites and the state’s sleepy second-city, Hilo.

Back in resort, dining options include Pacific Rim cuisine at The Canoe House, whilst The Gallery offers American regional dishes. Families with children are especially welcome at the Mauna Lani Bay.

THE FAIRMONT, KEA LANI MAUI

Luxury private villas just steps from Polo Beach make this a favourite resort of the rich and famous. Gleaming white Mexican-inspired architecture, plus 22,000 sq ft of water features create a fabulous tropical ambience.

Well worth a visit is the world's largest dormant volcano, Haleakala, as are the popular attractions of Lahaina, capital of Hawaii until 1845, and Hana, sometimes called 'Hawaii's most Hawaiian town'.

Near the resort are three championship golf courses. And for total relaxation, why not try the Spa Kea Lani and a choice of two superb restaurants in the evening.

CALIFORNIA

Vibrant Californian lifestyles have been hewn from the mountains and deserts that dominate this sunny Spanish-style state. And what a life it is!

Exciting international cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles are every traveller's dream, as are the charming coastal towns of Carmel and Santa Barbara.

Hollywood and Disneyland are fantasies checked-out by millions, whilst natural attractions like the Death Valley and Yosemite National Parks, amazing beaches, surfing and water-sports are all part of a uniquely Californian experience to explore from the area's world-class hotels.

SAN YSIDRO RANCH

Nestling at the foot of the dramatic Santa Ynez Mountains which overlook the Pacific Ocean, this 500-acre hideaway comprises 35 charming cottages where John F Kennedy honeymooned with Jackie!

Nearby Santa Barbara – or ‘America’s Riviera’ – is renowned for its Spanish-style architecture, beautiful pale-sand beach and stunning coastal scenery which extends to the ‘Big Sur’ and beyond.

After a day’s sightseeing in Carmel, Half Moon Bay, LA, Hollywood and so on, return to the Ranch for a set of tennis or a dip in the pool before dinner is served in the world-class Stonehouse Restaurant.

THE ST REGIS MONARCH BEACH RESORT & SPA

Re-defining the luxury resort experience, the St Regis at Dana Point was named one of the ‘Top 10 New Resorts for 2003’ by the Robb Report, and one of the ‘500 Greatest Hotels in the World’ by Travel & Leisure.

Accommodation is truly elegant, and leisure facilities include an ocean-front 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones, tennis courts and a pristine six-acre beach. The renowned Spa Gaucin provides personal pampering in 25 treatment rooms, whilst several top quality restaurants serve a wide range of cuisine to complete the St Regis’ five-diamond offering.

THE REGENT BEVERLY WILSHIRE

Famous as the hotel where Richard Gere met his *'Pretty Woman'*, The Regent cannot be surpassed for glitz and glamour. It is, without doubt, one of Beverly Hills' best-known landmarks.

The designer stores of Rodeo Drive are just a stroll away and the movie associations of Sunset Boulevard are within easy reach. Equally accessible is the fabulous fun of Disneyland and the seaside attractions of Santa Monica where *'Baywatch'* was filmed.

Back at the hotel, a full health spa with endless treatments are the perfect prelude to an evening of Californian cuisine and entertainment.

THE FAIRMONT, SAN FRANCISCO

Tony Bennett's signature tune *'I left my heart in San Francisco'* was launched at The Fairmont! One of the city's grandest hotels, a recent \$85 million facelift has elevated its elegance to world-class standards.

A superb fine-dining restaurant serving Pacific Rim specialities, an all-amenity health club and the best 'happy hour' in town are just some of The Fairmont's attractions.

Its central location is ideal for exploring the city on foot. Alternatively, a 49-mile scenic drive takes in spectacular views and fascinating sights such as Japantown, Grace Cathedral and Coit Tower.

LAS VEGAS

The neon oasis of Las Vegas rises from Nevada's southern desert like a mirage. Suddenly, all is glamour and excitement – as the likes of Frank Sinatra and Howard Hughes once discovered.

Lavishly-themed hotels which bestride the 6Km Las Vegas Boulevard – aka 'The Strip' – have their own shops, restaurants and casinos as well as world-class entertainment.

Other major attractions include glittering shopping malls, championship golf courses, trips to the Grand Canyon – and you'll even find man-made beaches!

THE VENETIAN

Re-capturing the romantic flavour of old Venice, this immense leisure resort of over 4,000 rooms makes a major statement – even by Las Vegas' standards.

Features such as a mock version of The Grand Canal and other realistic architectural flourishes set the scene for an environment boasting the obligatory casino, a spa and cobbled walkways lined with high-fashion shops.

Sixteen top-class restaurants include the Piero and Valentino by celebrated chefs Piero Selvaggio and Wolfgang Puck. World-famous American restaurants, Lutèce and Delmonico's, also have a presence.

THE BELLAGIO

This AAA five-diamond hotel, located in the heart of Las Vegas on 'The Strip', enjoys magnificent views from every angle. With its impressive lake and illuminated fountains, The Bellagio was the perfect location for filming *'Oceans Eleven'*.

By day, there's a choice of six pools, total self-indulgence at Spa Bellagio and designer shopping treats. Nevada's nearby canyons, mountains and deserts are well worth exploring – and when the sun goes down, enjoy superb cuisine *à la Bellagio* created by world-renowned chefs in several stylish venues, and dance the night away at the hotel's 'Light' nightclub.

ARIZONA

The aridity of Arizona sees its ultimate expression in The Grand Canyon, a sublime wonder of the world that's a must on all travel itineraries. For this is 'Wild West' country, where saguaro cacti dot infinite landscapes of desert plateaux, canyons and mountains.

A quarter of Arizona is Native American land, yet the harshness of empty desert-scapes is tempered by fascinating cities like Phoenix and Tucson where the past is never far away; in picturesque towns such as Sedona and Jerome; and the luxurious hotel resorts of Scottsdale.

THE FAIRMONT SCOTTSDALE PRINCESS

The Mexican-inspired architecture of The Fairmont against a stunning backdrop of the McDowell Mountains makes this the perfect hotel to enjoy a show-stopping Scottsdale sunset.

The Fairmont's two 18-hole golf courses will prove irresistible, while the world-class Willow Stream Spa has equal allure. Dining opportunities meanwhile range from gourmet Mexican to Mediterranean favourites and sizzling prime steaks.

Among the many attractions of Scottsdale are air-conditioned malls, designer stores and restaurants. There are tribal museums celebrating Hispanic, Native American and 'old west' cultures as well as old cowboy artefacts and hand-built haciendas.

FOUR SEASONS RESORT Scottsdale at Troon North

Frank Lloyd Wright would have approved of the colonial-style architecture of The Four Seasons. The great architect set up his winter studio in Scottsdale in 1937, appreciative of the town's desert location and quiet, tree-lined streets.

Set in a 40-acre nature reserve overlooking serrated mountain peaks, Four Seasons' sophistication is everywhere...

From the two 18-hole golf courses designed by Weiskopf and Morrish to a choice of restaurants with views of the Sonoran Desert, a spa offering Native American treatments and even off-roading in a Hummer – this is a truly exceptional resort.

THE PHOENICIAN

At the foot of Camelback Mountain on the fringes of Scottsdale is a visual masterpiece of nature, architecture and fine art. The Phoenician is part of its natural surroundings, created with the highest of expectations.

Spacious accommodation and fine furnishings, together with Arizona's most luxurious spa set the tone. Excellent sports facilities include a 12-court tennis garden, nine pools (one lined with mother-of-pearl!) and 27 holes of championship golf.

Overlooking the course is a stylish restaurant serving authentic south-west dishes, whilst exquisite modern French cuisine is available at the renowned Mary Elaine's.

HYATT REGENCY SCOTTSDALE

Set amid the beauty of the Sonoran Desert and McDowell Mountains, the elegant Hyatt Regency is a resort oasis packed with activities and interest.

From championship golf and tennis to a two-acre water playground and hot-air ballooning, the Hyatt has it all. To relax, visit the unique Sonwai Spa which explores the ancient traditions of Native Americans – and don't miss the Native American Environmental Learning Center.

Dining experiences range from Italian to south-western and 'contemporary steakhouse', whilst children of all ages can enjoy the 'fun and find out' attractions of Camp Hyatt.

FLORIDA

From the irrepressible Mickey Mouse in Orlando to shades of Hemingway in Florida Keys, The Sunshine State is as diverse and exciting as anywhere in the world.

A citrus-fruit climate and vibrant Hispanic culture lend a particular Floridian aura to everything from exploring the Everglades wetlands, to designer label shopping on Worth Avenue, Palm Beach – from padding across South Beach, Miami, to tee-ing off at one of the four luxury hotel resorts featured here.

TURNBERRY ISLE

Ranked as one of North America's finest golf resorts, Turnberry Isle boasts two Robert Trent Jones Senior 18-hole golf courses. For tennis lovers, there are 11 courts and a resident pro for private lessons.

Guests have access to the private 'Ocean Club on the Atlantic' with its own beach, pool and the Ocean Grill and Bar, whilst the hotel's four restaurants includes the award winning 'Veranda'.

Wonderfully located in Aventura, North Miami, Turnberry Isle is just minutes from Miami's beaches, shopping, sports venues and nightlife.

THE BREAKERS

A recent \$145 million expansion has ushered in a new era of casual sophistication for what has been Palm Beach's grandest resort for over a century. The Renaissance-style hotel stands on 140-acres of prime oceanfront land at the heart of this super-rich town.

World-class amenities include 36 holes of championship golf, a Mediterranean-style beach club and a new hi-tech Family Entertainment Centre, as well as several restaurants and on-site boutiques.

Within walking distance is Palm Beach's most famous thoroughfare, Worth Avenue, which boasts a spectacular mix of top-name fashion boutiques, art galleries and shops.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL MIAMI

Miami's only five-diamond hotel is located on prestigious Brickell Key Island with easy access to fun-fuelled South Beach and the world's largest concentration of Art Deco buildings along Ocean Drive.

The Mandarin is a clever blend of exotic Asian influences within an exciting contemporary design where guest rooms have balconies with breath-taking water views over Biscayne Bay and the Miami skyline.

Amenities include a fully-equipped health club, and a spa inspired by Oriental traditions. Among various water-front dining venues is the Café Sambal for Asian specialities and the Mandarin's vibrant signature restaurant, Azul.

PORTOFINO BAY HOTEL

Situated on-site at Universal Studios' theme parks in Orlando, the Portofino Bay has been designed to capture the Mediterranean feeling of the exclusive Italian resort of the same name. Delightful rooms and comprehensive amenities which include supervised children's programmes make this an ideal family hotel.

Guests enjoy special privileges at the two Universal Studios theme parks and, after dark, there's the beguiling choice of either the Universal CityWalk entertainment centre – where big-name clubs and restaurants beckon – or the Portofino's very own Liguria-inspired 'Delfino Riviera', assuredly the best restaurant in Orlando.

NEW YORK CITY

Broadway and the Bronx, Greenwich and the Guggenheim, Central Park and the Statue of Liberty, Times Square and Fifth Avenue...through TV and cinema, music and theatre, the icons of New York are known to us all. So why not do it live!

The Big Apple is fantastic at any time of year - and most of the famous attractions are concentrated in Manhattan. For sight-seeing or shopping, show-going or night-clubbing, the luxury hotels selected here are a perfect base in the world's most exciting city.

THE CARLYLE

Synonymous with New York City luxury, The Carlyle has attracted a wealth of famous guests since it opened in 1929. Pre-eminently positioned on Madison Avenue – close to Central Park and the famous stores of Fifth Avenue – its ambience is reminiscent of an elegant English town-house.

Dining is pure sophistication. Café Carlyle is unequalled for its sheer class – and the cabaret is always excellent. Likewise, French dining and Sunday brunch are legendary at Dumonet – and please note that Bemelmans Bar is *the* place for decadent cocktails.

THE ST REGIS

One of the world's top hotels – and holder of the prestigious AAA Five Diamond Award – the St Regis is a classic Beaux Arts hotel built in 1904. Situated just off Fifth Avenue in the heart of midtown Manhattan, it is within easy reach of top stores like Cartier, Tiffany's and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Opulent touches at the St Regis include Louis XVI-style furniture, crystal chandeliers, silk wall-coverings and a bevy of butlers. Afternoon tea is served in Astor Court, while the King Cole Bar – birthplace of the 'Bloody Mary' – creates cocktails *par excellence*.

NEW ENGLAND

Prepare to be amazed when you see the autumn foliage of New England! Prepare yourself too for the picture-postcard villages of Connecticut, the opulent mansions of Rhode Island, high-quality skiing in Vermont and the Great Outdoors that is Maine.

See for yourself why Americans escape to the mesmerizing beauty of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, two unspoilt islands just a couple of hours from Boston, the region's largest and most vibrant city and a major centre of American history and culture.

THE RITZ-CARLTON, BOSTON

A \$60 million refurbishment says total luxury is now firmly re-established in every part of this city-centre hotel. From the superb restaurants, to The Bar where the 'Ritz Fizz' cocktail was created, to butler service where attention to detail is everything – this is a hotel on a mission.

In a city with more sites relating to the American Revolution than any other, plus a host of more recent landmarks including Harvard University and the John F Kennedy Museum, the Ritz-Carlton is an unbeatable venue from which to explore both Boston and New England beyond.

THE RITZ CARLTON, BOSTON COMMON

'Contemporary luxury' is the keynote of this superlative new hotel which overlooks Boston Common, the city's most beautiful green space. It is also close to the renowned Theater District where major US premieres have been held for productions such as Tennessee Williams' *'A Streetcar Named Desire'*.

The hotel's stylish surroundings are at their most breathtaking in The Lounge where afternoon tea is served with a \$1 million modern art collection as a backdrop. The Presidential Suite is similarly opulent with panoramic views of Boston and every conceivable comfort and convenience.

VANDERBILT HALL HOTEL

Of the dozens of grand mansions built in Newport, Rhode Island as the summer homes of New York's rich and famous, it was the Vanderbilt family who gave this particular mansion to the townspeople in 1909.

Since then, it has been transformed into a unique luxury hotel which boasts individually-styled guest rooms and graciously decorated dining rooms serving exquisite food and wines.

The hotel is very close to intriguing shops, restaurants and galleries, as well as the scenic harbour of what is a premier sailing resort and original home of the Americas Cup.

THE INN AT SAWMILL FARM

A quintessentially New England experience awaits every guest at this lovingly restored Vermont farmhouse. Original timbered ceilings and weathered boards - as well as a beautifully peaceful location – create a special timeless atmosphere. This is echoed in the Continental-American cuisine and complemented by fine wines from The Inn's award-winning cellar.

Activities such as boating, fishing and horse-riding abound in the nearby Green Mountains, and minutes away is year-round championship golf and winter skiing at Mount Snow. In the autumn, nowhere is better for viewing Vermont's spectacular change of leaf colours.
