

# In Transit

TRAVEL NEWS, DEALS AND TIPS

## Q&A

### For JAMES VINCENT McMORROW, Dublin is a lot more than Guinness.



For the alternative R & B artist James Vincent McMorrow, the world's image of Dublin fails to capture what makes the city special for locals.

"To a lot of people's perceptions, Dublin is home to the Guinness Storehouse and Christ Church Cathedral," he said. "We export so much of that culture. But in reality, I don't know anything about the Guinness Storehouse, except that it's there. Dublin is more culturally verdant and there's more to be seen everywhere."

Below are excerpts from a conversation about Dublin's other offerings with Mr. McMorrow, whose latest album is "Post Tropical."

KENAN CHRISTIANSEN

#### Q. What's your experience of Dublin?

A. For me, it's drinking great coffee and being by the sea. I grew up in a place called Malahide, which is by the water and is beautifully quiet, leafy and part serene. If you hop in a car, you can go there in 20 minutes.

#### What are some of your favorite coffee shops?

If you were to go back five years, Starbucks would have been considered the best in Dublin. Now they have these small barista shops that make truly incredible coffee. There's this place called 3FE, which is run by Colin Harmon. He's finished third in the World Barista Championships and treats it



The view of Malahide Beach and Howth Head, near Dublin, is a familiar one for the musician James Vincent McMorrow.

like a science. Around the corner from me, there's another beautiful coffee shop called the Fumbally. I've traveled quite a lot and become a coffee nut. At these places you can go in and order a flat white. If I go somewhere else and order the same, and the people on the other end of the counter don't know what I'm talking about, it's probably best for me to leave.

#### Which music venues are worth checking out?

The main place where everyone congregates would be Whelan's. It's one of those places that probably should fit 200 people, but it feels like they somehow manage to pack 700 inside. I guess the New York comparison might be the Bowery Ballroom; I don't know whether that place has the same infrastructure, but Whelan's nurtures musicians. It's very homespun. All my first shows

were there. All my first experiences as a musician were there. I don't think you'll find a musician in Dublin who didn't get their start there. The great thing about Whelan's is it was a great leveler. When I was starting out, I'd go in there and every musician, whether it was me at the time, or some of the bigger Irish musicians like Damien Rice, we'd all just be there together. In a way that made it very intimidating. I'm mostly a keep-to-myself kind of guy, but you slowly find yourself getting folded into the musical tapestry.

#### Where do you go to eat?

Food in Dublin has gotten immeasurably better than it was. When I was a kid, there weren't a lot of options. Now you're overwhelmed with options. One of my favorite places is a Lebanese spot called Rotana cafe; you can go late at night and get food for very little

money. One of my favorite bars is J. O'Connell. It's a quintessentially Irish bar, but not in a twee sense. It's one of those places where the people who run it don't really want you to be there, but they're O.K. with your presence, as long as you're not too loud and they play the music that they want to play, which is usually Garth Brooks or something ridiculous. (For more on reinvented Irish food in Dublin, see Choice Tables on Page 1.)

Dublin is actually quite small. You could probably walk across it from top to bottom in 30 minutes, so it's hard to get off the beaten path. There's a place called the Winding Stair, which is out on the river. People go there at 8 o'clock at night when the sun is going down, and look out over the city. In some ways, it can feel like the tiniest city in the world.

## BRIEFS



Couples massage at Canyon Ranch in Miami Beach.

### COUPLES GETAWAY

#### Romance Is in Your Mind

Most hotels promote Valentine's Day packages with rose petals on the bed and chocolate-dipped strawberries on the nightstand. But Canyon Ranch Hotel and Spa in Miami Beach takes a therapist's approach to intimacy with a three-day program devoted to sensuality and bond-building.

From Feb. 12 to 14, the resort will offer expert-led "Sensuality Sessions" covering sex and exercise, the role of testosterone in male neuroscience, and foods that stimulate the libido. The sessions are included in the two-night "Couples Intimacy Experience," which bundles a couples therapy session, medical consultation and a 125-minute couples spa treatment featuring a mud bath, body scrub and massage (from \$1,200 per person, double occupancy). ELAINE GLUSAC

### ADVENTURE TOUR

#### Living Like Bond, James Bond

James Bond was a tremendous traveler, equally at home in a Monte Carlo casino as summiting a Swiss peak. Now one bespoke tour operator is offering clients the opportunity to live like 007.

Inspired by the 50th anniversary of the death of Ian Fleming, author of the Bond series of books, London-based Brown & Hudson has outlined a journey that begins with training in surveillance and firearms before hitting Bond-associated highlights of Europe, including Switzerland, where travelers can bungee jump from a mountain peak; Iceland, to drive an Aston Martin; and Monaco, to, of course, gamble.

The company has designed only one such trip so far this year, a 14-day itinerary priced around 88,000 pounds (about \$145,000) for an American client that includes three full days of secret-service training with British former special-forces officers, then several days each in Switzerland and Iceland. ELAINE GLUSAC

## ON THE HORIZON



JEANNETTE LANDFALD/VISIT NORWAY

**Bicentenary** This year marks the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Norwegian Constitution at Eidsvoll, on May 17, 1814. Within Norway, the bicentenary is being celebrated with events throughout the year. Visitors can also tour Eidsvoll House, above, which has been restored to look as it might have when the constitution was signed there. The house opens Feb. 16, and tours run all year.

**App** Last October, the free language learning platform Duolingo said it wanted to expand beyond its original six offerings. Now, Russian, Hungarian, Turkish, Polish and Dutch natives will have the opportunity to learn English, and soon a number of languages, including fictional selections like Dothraki and Klingon, will be available for English speakers.

## TRENDING

### Need the Concierge? There's an App for That

Whether major chains or boutique independents, hotels are introducing apps that offer digital alternatives to traditional hotel services, especially those of the concierge.

The 26-room Le Pavillon des Lettres in Paris has unveiled a bilingual concierge app that offers itineraries for various ages and stages — consider a toddler's day in Paris, or a Hemingway-themed outing — as well as Paris news, weather and arts listings.

The mobile app at the Wequasset Resort and Golf Club in Massachusetts uses geo-tracking to tell when a guest is on the property and will refresh with activities, menus and events.

With the app covering all 24 Conrad Hotels & Resorts worldwide, guests can check in before arrival and pick up their keys later, as well as specify their bath amenities.

Some apps are more interactive than others. In Australia, about 40 percent of the guests of the QT Sydney download the mobile app, which can be used in or out of the hotel to query the concierge directly. "So, it's a time saver for all parties — and it amplifies our reach to our guests wherever they are," Claudia Salacan, a QT concierge, wrote in



The reception area for the spa at the QT Sydney hotel.

an email.

No one is ready to call the concierge role obsolete, but changing demographics suggest a more wired future in which travelers increasingly use technology for self-service check-ins and dinner reservations.

"Concierges in hotels can and should provide timely, high value and exclu-

sive access to all a destination has to offer," Chekitan Dev, associate professor of strategic marketing and brand management at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, wrote in an email. "If they don't, they will become extinct, just like the elevator operator or spittoon polisher."

ELAINE GLUSAC

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ONLINE BLOG, WRITTEN BY THE EDITORS AND REPORTERS OF THE TRAVEL SECTION, AT NYTIMES.COM/INTRANSIT

## CORRECTIONS

An article last Sunday about Oaxen Krog & Slip in Stockholm misstated the given name of the chef and owner there. He is Magnus Ek, not Markus Ek.

The Surfacing column last Sunday, about the Walker's Point area of Milwaukee, included outdated information about Purple Door Ice Cream. The spot no longer offers mini-cone samples, and it closed Jan. 30 and is moving in March to a new location, at 205 South Second Street.

The cover article on Jan. 17 about James Baldwin's Paris omitted a source for information about Baldwin's main night-life posse and their favorite haunts. The source was Monique Wells, founder of the blog *Entrée to Black Paris*. The article also misstated the street on which l'Abbaye, a nightclub co-owned by Gordon Heath, and a favorite spot of Baldwin and his friends, was situated. It was on Rue de l'Abbaye, not Rue Jacob.