

E33 one way in mid-April. You can book offers for return rail travel from Zürich airport to Bad Ragaz through the Switzerland Travel Centre (020 7845 7689; stc.co.uk); the cost is around £47.

### PACKAGES

Grand Resort Bad Ragaz (0041 81 303 3030; resortragaz.ch) offers the "Harley-Davidson Emotion Package" from £535 per person, based on two sharing, which includes two nights' half board, a massage, and use of a Harley-Davidson for a day. Riders must hold a valid full motorcycle licence.

If the bike doesn't interest you but the hotel does, Healing

including a return flight from London, return first-class rail transfers, two nights' b&b and access to the spa and Tamina Therme public spa areas.

### THE INSIDE TRACK

● If you're taking your motorbike gear with you, why not bike to the airport as parking is free for motorcyclists. Short stay Car Park 2 (Red) at Gatwick has motorcycle bays on each floor – level 2 for departures (there are no tethering posts). You'll need to take a ticket to raise the entry barrier. On exit, get the ticket validated at the building before the exit barriers or

● The hotel will advise on weather and if conditions are poor there are plenty of routes that avoid the altitudes and still provide wonderful scenery.  
● Avoid motorcycle gear hire charges by taking your own.  
● Avoid straying over the border. The motorcycle insurance is valid only for Switzerland.

routes but there may be preferable ones and planning will save valuable riding time.  
● The hotel provides insurance for the bike, but not the rider. Make sure your travel insurance covers you for use of a motorbike. Most cover touring, but not off-roading without paying extra.  
● It's worth keeping a filmed record of the trip. I borrowed an excellent Action-Pro CM7200 Sports Camera from a company called Dogcam (01208 269159; dogcamsp.com). It's small and can be fitted to your helmet or, using a bracket, to the handlebars.

## FOUR MORE TRIPS FOR A MID-LIFE CRISIS

### BOXING IN CUBA

Show you're not on the ropes yet by spending six mornings in the ring at a boxing school in Havana learning to jab with a Cuban champion. Afternoons and evenings are free to explore, stock up on Cohibas or a mojito.

Original Travel (020 7978 7333; originaltravel.co.uk) offers the trip from £2,400, including Virgin Atlantic flights, seven nights' b&b at the Parque Central and six boxing sessions.

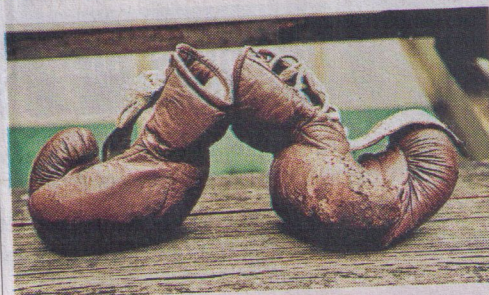
### KAYAKING ON THE CONGO

Spend 10 days kayaking down the Congo one-on-one with Phil Harwood, the only man who's ever done the 2,900-mile "source to sea" descent of the African river. En route you'll try and catch goliath tigerfish, which grow to more than 100lb and have razor-sharp teeth. For the ultimate home movie hire your own documentary cameraman who'll accompany you to film and edit the whole trip.

Brown + Hudson (020 3358 0110; brownandhudson.com) can tailor-make the trip for £14,250, including business class flights to Kinshasa. Hiring a cameraman would add another £10,150.

### SKIING WITH A KURD

The Zagros Mountains in the autonomous region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq have plenty of snowy



Box clever: learn to fight in Cuba, paddle on the Congo and swim to Alcatraz in San Francisco



peaks above 10,000ft on which to ski. There are no resorts, just basic lodges, shepherds' huts and family homes in which to stay before you head off-piste: there's no on-piste.

Secret Compass (020 3239 8038; secretcompass.com) from £2,156 per person, including flights to Erbil.

### AN ALCATRAZ SWIM

Swimming from Alcatraz Island to the San Francisco shore, a distance of just over a mile, certainly has a wow factor but truth is, with a wetsuit, tide chart and back up boat it's perfectly doable by averagely competent swimmers – but it makes a great story to tell back home.

Team the swim with a Harley-Davidson trip 70 miles to Healdsburg in wine country and private tastings. If you're here in late August, motor on to Nevada for the Burning Man festival, full of baby boomers reliving their youth in the Black Rock Desert.

Bon Voyage (0800 316 3012; bon-voyage.co.uk) can tailor-make trips to San Francisco; the Alcatraz swim is extra and can be organised by Swimtrek (01273 739713; swimtrek.com) from £270 per person based on a minimum of four participants. Burning Man festival (burningman.com) is also extra; it starts August 26 and some tickets are still available from £440.

**WILL HIDE**

**BLE CALEDONIA – BOOK EARLY AND SAVE £800 PER COUPLE**

