



Travel Trunks

European Luxury Personified: Scotland, Czech Republic and the French Riviera

Cue the DVD player in your head. The movie playing is divided into three parts. Imagine yourself as being the main character in all three. These “movie trailers” will be of three journeys, each with its own well-appointed distinctiveness. The first takes us to Scotland and a place called Ayrshire. Rugged beauty and lush woodlands surround a castle, Glennapp by name. Antiques and oil paintings sit in waiting for a contemplative gaze.

The second trailer lifts us to a classic city in the Czech Republic... Prague. Extraordinary style hits you in the eye at 360 degrees. Located right in the center of Europe, the country itself borders Germany, Austria, Slovakia and Poland and owes its progress

to many cultural influences. Your place of rest here is Prague’s Personal Luxury Hotel, the Hoffmeister.

Finally, fast forward to the third story, the one where you are on the French Riviera, perched high atop a cliffside village, presiding over azure blue waters. You are sipping the finest wine, on the finest balcony you have ever seen in your life, and yup... life is very good. The lights of the shoreline begin to flicker on and a billion stars open their eyes. You’ve made a stand in the Chateau de la Chevre D’Or and no living creature is going to uproot you from this place.

Pampered bliss is the only way you can truly describe these three great lodgings!



Glennapp Castle was built by caring hands in 1870 and sits on a hill presiding over the Irish Sea and the island of Ailsa Craig. The view will certainly knock the haggis out of you, too! Just 90 minutes southwest of Glasgow, Glennapp went through a six year restoration process in the 1990's and through all that sweat and loving has emerged as one of those places that takes a divot out of your heart. Then there's the golf. With world class courses at Royal Troon, Turnberry, Prestwick and Western Gales within an hour's drive, it's no wonder this spot is as special as it is.

Besides this classic stick swinging, there are also other activities on the sumptuous grounds including tennis and croquet, while fishing for salmon or trout can also be arranged on local rivers.

The castle features 17 rooms, with all the electronic goodies. Many have with fireplaces in them. Endless oak hallways and furnishings lead you to elegant lounges, where just sitting around and reading or studying the oil paintings can swallow up scads of time itself. There are also 30 acres of garden to graze through, meaning plenty of space to lose yourself to another era.

The dining is to die for as well, with internationally renowned staff summoning up masterpieces on a regular basis. There is also a choice of either complementary wines from the cellar or choice from the extensive Connoisseurs List.

In short, the bonnie Scottish spirits smile upon this little spot of heaven!

Over into mainland Europe, we come upon the magnificent city of Prague. Unscathed by the bombs of World War II, the cityscape is stunning, with cobblestone lanes, ancient courtyards, dark passages and churches beyond number, all watched over by an 1100-year-old castle. Prague Castle is the most popular sight visited in the city and is the largest ancient castle in the world, measuring 5 football fields long! The medieval center of town is a maze of streets best covered on foot and after-work pubs teem with life long into the Czech night.

Our pillow rests in the Hotel Hoffmeister. Located near perfect shopping and 300 meters from Prague Castle, the hotel's elegant architecture gives off a hearty whiff of romance and history and those who saunter through its doors are more than thankful that they didn't choose someplace else! It also has a funky artsy feel to it as its founder Adolf Hoffmeister was a globetrotting lover of art, good food and fine wine. In fact, you can see some of his portraits depicting some of the most important personalities of the first half of the century (most of whom he also shared a story or imbibement with). Anyone who hung with Salvador Dali or Pablo Picasso must be kind of unique, one might think!

The hotel itself consists of 30 rooms and eight suites, each with climate control and like Glennapp Castle, all the requisite electronic conveniences. Rich colours and classic furnishings complete the picture.



Because of its preposterous location, like... right in the middle of things, visitors can wind their way to some amazing discoveries, both architecturally and culturally.

Built between the 11th and 18th centuries, the Old Town, the Lesser Town and the New Town are sprinkled with many magnificent monuments, such as Hradcany Castle, St Vitus Cathedral, Charles Bridge and numerous churches and palaces, that were built mostly in the 14th century under the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles IV.

Prague is amazing and we might suggest that the Hoffmeister would be an ideal launching pad for all of the city's charms.



Our last stop fills one's mouth up with so many descriptive words, it's hard to extricate the sentences! Where else would you go other than the French Riviera to bathe in such full bodied magnificence! The Chateau de la Chevre D'Or is located between Monte Carlo and Nice on a cliffside, 400 metres above the Mediterranean in the medieval hilltop village of Eze. Now doesn't that picture just give one "the wiggles"! The small narrow roads, archways, shady squares, refreshing ancient fountains and stone houses with red tile roofs turn this setting into a perfect fairy tale ending.

The Chateau itself is quite beyond description, espe-

cially the Presidential Suite which contains its own outdoor cliffside swimming pool that seems to open up to the depths below. If you happen to immerse yourself in this opulent "ceement pond", the water appears to disappear into the horizon, much like one's breath at the sight of it. The rest of the Chateau also manages to drop jaws on a regular basis. Marble lined bathrooms and sun splashed balconies are the norm, while on the grounds are found gorgeous garden terraces with fountains, benches, tables and chairs, olive trees, exotic plantings of bananas, dates, lemon and orange trees, waterfalls and ponds.

As one might expect there is a world class restaurant here at the highest point of the hotel, which offers the essential 270 degree view of the Mediterranean. There is also three other restaurants in the hotel, which cater to all tastes, casual or non.

Village visitors can expect to poke around perfumeries, shops selling aromatic spices, and numerous arts and crafts boutiques – some like tiny caves dug out of the rocky hillside. There are also picturesque walkways and paths flanked by pine and olive trees that wind down to the sea and there are also many things to turn your heads here. The Riviera is ... after all... the Riviera!

This is of course, assuming that you choose to leave this bit of cloud nine, and many fight the urge.

Three properties, each with their own special and unique allure and we hope that you might consider pursuing their rich and inviting pleasures. It's not such a bad thing to treat yourself every so often and Scotland, the Czech Republic and the French Riviera are each brilliant in their own right. Toss in the three hotels we've described and there is no doubt you can fulfill any longing need to be spoiled. The offerings are magnetic.

Picture yourself in the story. End of reel.

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