

# saturday

# review



**Alan Cumming**  
Mutant? Drag queen?  
Smurf? The actor  
on mixing it up 8



7-DAY  
TV & RADIO  
GUIDE  
page 23



## America's most wanted

The TV show of the decade:  
Breaking Bad is back



## 38 Travel

## Travel tips

**Cycle with Sir Rocco Forte**

Rub shoulders — or at least wheels — with Sir Rocco Forte in Italy next month. Sir Rocco's Hotel Savoy in Florence is running a cycling tour during the opening weekend of the UCI World Road Championships. Forte is inviting people to join him on the route of the men's road

race, riding 106km from Lucca to Florence and the onward 16km loop to Fiesole. There is another 100km leg the next day through the Chianti region. The trip, from September 20-22, costs from €767pp (£655) for two nights' B&B at the Hotel Savoy, use of a De Rosa bike, a cycling outfit, one dinner and one lunch (roccofortehotels.com).

**Horse racing in Paris**

The Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe on October 5-6 is a different take on a weekend in the French capital. Horse Racing Abroad (01244 355580, www.horseracingabroad.com) has a weekend package from £370pp, with Eurostar travel, one night's B&B at the Hyatt Regency Paris Etoile, transfers and admission to the Longchamp racecourse.

**Art hotel opens in Morocco**

The Fellah Hotel opens next month in a 14-acre estate in Tassoultane at the foot of the Atlas Mountains, 16km from Marrakesh. It will have an arts and culture centre, including a library with 10,000 books. The aim is to bring contemporary art to Morocco and support local education and literacy. The 69 rooms and 10 villas are furnished with flea market finds alongside modern pieces. Rooms cost from €170 per night, B&B (0021 2525 06 50 00, fellah-hotel.com).

**Butler on the beach**

Enjoy silver service and bubbles on the beach with your own butler from the Grand Brighton (0871 2224684, deve-re-hotels.co.uk). Jeeves will set up deckchairs, a parasol and an iPod dock and then produce



lobster and chips or a traditional afternoon tea with a bottle of champagne and a jug of Pimm's. He'll even supply cold towels and sunscreen. The catch? You need to stay at the Grand before August 31 (rooms cost from £115) before you can book the butler, at £200 per couple.

Jane Knight

## To advertise in the Travel section

Please call  
the Team

020 7481 1989

THE TIMES

NEW 2014  
BROCHURE  
OUT NOW



PERU

Travel with Cox & Kings on the 15-day Train to Machu Picchu group tour from only £2,895 per person.

This comprehensive tour staying in 4- & 5-star hotels, including an overnight stay in Machu Picchu, visits Cuzco, Arequipa, the Colca Canyon and Lake Titicaca.



To speak to an expert or request a brochure, please call 0845 322 4470 quoting reference TIMLA14 or visit [www.coxandkings.co.uk/peru](http://www.coxandkings.co.uk/peru)  
ATOL 2815 ABTA V2999

SMALL GROUP TOURS · TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL



Times Square, the place to be in New York for New Year's Eve

## Travel doctor



**Q** My husband, 19-year-old son and I are going to New York at the end of December. Could you tell us the best way to celebrate New Year's Eve in this city?

Karen Carter, via e-mail

**A** The centre of the celebrations, is, of course, Times Square, where the New Year's Eve Ball begins its descent from the flagpole on top of One Times Square at 11.59pm as the crowds count down to midnight. If you'd like to be in the thick of it, you can buy a Times Square family pass — from \$95 (£60) for under-21s, \$195 for over 21s — which includes drinks, food and entry to party venues. Another option is to spend the evening hobnobbing with the stars (albeit wax ones) at Madame Tussauds, half a block away on West 42nd Street. Tickets for its party start at \$85 for under-21s and \$125 for over-21s. Book for either at [balldrop.com](http://balldrop.com). You can also see in 2014 by taking the Brooklyn Bridge Walk into the New Year, which starts near City Hall at various times during the evening. You should get to see fireworks from Central Park as well as the Empire State Building light show. Early-bird tickets are \$25 through [newyorktalksandwalks.com](http://newyorktalksandwalks.com)

**Q** I have a hankering for a quiet week on the Isles of Scilly in September and am confused about the best way to travel. I'm on a medium budget, so is the train to Penzance and then a ferry the best option? And which is the best isle to visit, having never been before?

Eleanor, via e-mail

**A** There are several ways to get to the Isles of Scilly. You can fly from Newquay,

Penzance and Exeter but it is cheaper to get the *Scillonian III* ferry (0845 7105555, [ios-travel.co.uk](http://ios-travel.co.uk)), which has daily departures with return fares from £37. St Mary's is the largest island and also the best place to get boats to the other islands, which have no cars and are peaceful. St Mary's offers plenty in the way of beaches, walks, pubs and shops and The Star Castle (01720 422317, [star-castle.co.uk](http://star-castle.co.uk)) would make a great base — single travellers can stay in one of the 16th-century guardrooms within the castle wall, which are just big enough for one person. The hotel would be happy to arrange guided walks and island hopping. A week's B&B in September, including return ferry crossing, costs £950. Alternatively, for absolute peace and quiet on a carless island, try the New Inn (01720 422844) on Tresco or Hell Bay (01720 422947, [hellbay.co.uk](http://hellbay.co.uk)) on Bryher.

**Q** I am a single, active septuagenarian. I usually spend Christmas with relatives but this year that option will probably not be available to me. What I should like is a fairly quiet home-from-home Christmas without hassle. Any suggestions?

June Harrison, via e-mail

**A** You could try one of HF Holidays' (0845 470 8558, [hfholidays.co.uk](http://hfholidays.co.uk)) house-party breaks held at Church Stretton in Shropshire and St Ives in Cornwall. The Church Stretton break starts at £647pp for four nights, including full board, two guided excursions and a trip to the local panto. The St Ives six-night break is more active, with walks, and costs £799pp full board with no single supplement. If that sounds too energetic, the excellent Wentworth Hotel, in Aldeburgh, Suffolk, has a three-night Christmas package costing £591 in a single room.

Julia Brookes is the Travel Doctor

## Don't put up with this Tardy response after cancelled hotel stay

**I booked a three-night stay at the Britannia Hotel in Lisbon; one night for May 24 at a cost of £150.68 and two nights for June 1 and 2 at a cost of £327.90. Because of unforeseen circumstances involving our family and the closure of Heathrow, I was forced to cancel our stay on June 1. I e-mailed Low Cost Holidays on May 24, giving them eight days' notice of this. I e-mailed again from Portugal and tried phoning. When I returned, I was told my e-mails had not been received. While on the phone I forwarded all the e-mails. I phoned again and was told it would take a month to "look at my case". I received a generic e-mail on July 5, apologising for the delay. To date I have heard nothing. Low Cost Holidays has had more than nine weeks to process this claim. I feel this is totally unreasonable.**

Shelagh Rabbet, via e-mail

As you were cancelling your hotel stay a

week before you were due to travel, it is unlikely that Low Cost Holidays' terms and conditions would have permitted a refund — and so it proved. "At that stage, any cancellation for any reason, either in full or in part, would have resulted in full loss of monies paid in respect of the reservation," said a spokesman, who added: "In circumstances such as this, we do advise passengers to contact their travel insurance company to see if they are covered." However, Low Cost Holidays should not have taken so long to respond. It is investigating why this happened and is offering a gesture of goodwill to apologise for the delay.

### Contact us ...

If you have a gripe, suggestion or question about holiday travel, write to Travel Doctor, The Times Travel Desk, 3 Thomas More Square, London E98 1TT, or e-mail [traveldoctor@thetimes.co.uk](mailto:traveldoctor@thetimes.co.uk). Please include contact details. If you have a dispute with a travel company, try to resolve it before contacting us. Do not send us original documents. Unfortunately we cannot reply to every inquiry.