



AP/JENNIFER KAY
David Tansley of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., lounges in the pool at The Villa Casa Casuarina, a boutique hotel that was the home of fashion designer Gianni Versace in Miami Beach, Fla.

Versace's mansion now hotel

JENNIFER KAY
TRAVEL/CRISTE PERKINS
MIAMI BEACH, Fla. — Viewers intrigued by the Gianni Versace murder case featured in the new season of *American Crime Story* can retrace the fashion designer's steps at his former mansion in South Beach.

Tourists stop on its stone front steps every day to pose for pictures where Versace was fatally shot by serial killer Andrew Cunanan in 1997. There's more to the Mediterranean-style mansion than Versace's death, however.

Now a boutique hotel, The Villa Casa Casuarina, Versace's former home still reflects his glamorous designs and opulent lifestyle. Visitors can swim in the pool he lined with 24-karat gold tiles, sleep on double-king-size beds so large they require custom-made sheets, gaze at the ocean from his rooftop observatory and dine in a gourmet restaurant established in his former dining room.

A resident artist maintains the mosaics and frescos that Versace had made for the property, including designs showcasing his signature snake-haired Medusa head, said Chauncey Copeland, the hotel's general manager.

"We actually have preserved what Versace created here and just augmented it with some modern touches for the convenience of our hotel guests and restaurant patrons," Copeland said.

Versace spent \$33 million renovating the three-story building he bought in 1992. It was originally an apartment complex built in 1930 by Standard Oil heir Alden Freeman. After Versace's death, his family sold the property. The Villa Casa Casuarina now is part of the Victor Hotels group, which acquired the mansion at a 2003 auction for \$48.5 million.

The opportunity to sleep in Versace's former bedrooms stands out among other luxury hotel experiences, even in glittery South Beach, said Joey Cargill, of Manila, the Philippines, a hotel guest relaxing in the pool just after Christmas.

"It's just the history and Versace was an artist, and I kind of consider myself a little bit of an artist. Maybe I can grasp a little bit of that, in a different fashion," Cargill said.

To live like Versace is to live large, transforming the most ordinary things into outrageous memories. "I can't even hit all sides of the bed, it's so big. I just take a corner of it," Cargill said.

The *Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* airs at 9 p.m. Wednesdays on FX.

The cast and crew spent about a month filming at the hotel, Copeland said. "It's really striking just how accurate they are," he said.



AP/JENNIFER KAY
Messias that the fashion designer created for his dining room in his South Beach mansion are now the backdrop for the gourmet restaurant inside The Villa Casa Casuarina in Miami Beach, Fla.



TNS/STEVE HAGGERTY
Howler monkeys, kings of the rain forest canopy, are hard to see but easy to identify; listen for their loud throaty howls. Though nine species have been identified, Costa Rica is home to just one, the common mantled howler.



TNS/STEVE HAGGERTY
Keel-billed toucans, bright-colored and slow-flying, are easy to spot in dense rain forests like those in the Pacuare River gorge.

Traveling by ear

In Costa Rica, nature comes first, and you can hear it if you listen

ANNE Z. COOKE
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

TURRIALBA, Costa Rica — It was 6:01 a.m. when we heard them barking, an insistent "hub-hub-hub-hub" floating through the rain forest canopy and over Pacuare Lodge.

"Howler monkeys," said Steve, squinting at his watch. Then a toucan weighed in, two long, raspy "screeches" close to our deck, in the Rio Pacuare Forest Reserve, in eastern Costa Rica's Barro Colorado National Park.

Up in a flash, we grabbed the binoculars and dashed outside, where a chorus of birds, chirps and whistles ushered in the dawn.

"Shhhhh!" Steve said, hopefully, peering over the railing into the underbrush. "Listen! Nice that a growl!" Wildlife on parade is a predictable event at most Costa Rican eco-lodges. Coatis, capuchin monkeys, birds and butterflies lead off, followed by sloths, bacillus lizards (Jesus lizards because they "walk" on water) and green frogs, with howler monkeys, tapirs, armadillos and tarantulas at the rear. But big cats, ocelots and pumas? Once in a green moon.

"Jaguar? Maybe, but don't count on it," said travel planner Alison Carey, three months earlier when she called to talk about our trip. A Latin America specialist with Scott Dunn Personal Journeys, Carey and her colleagues research and book custom, personalized adventures for individual travelers.

We'd been to Costa Rica before, but just briefly, on a cruise ship stop-

over. This time would be different, we agreed. Hence the call to Scott Dunn Personal Journeys, a leader in the growing trend toward custom travel.

"You'll like Pacuare Lodge," said Carey. "It's on the river, an easy four-mile raft ride downstream," she said. "It's known for wildlife, and wild cats, too, though they're rarely seen. It's isolated, but that's part of the appeal. You know what they say: Costa Rica is one of Central America's safest countries."

Was it? Sporadic upheavals have plagued Central America for decades, from corrupt governments and armed insurrections to civil wars and more recently, drug trafficking. What makes Costa Rica different?

Then our itinerary arrived in the mail, a spiral-bound notebook. Listing dates, places and our contacts at each, with blank space for notes. The last three nights would be on our own, joining well-booked friends for a reunion at Villa Manzu, a palatial mansion on the Papagayo Peninsula.

But the question lingered. "Is it true? Is Costa Rica Central America's safest country?" I asked Abel, the Scott Dunn driver who picked us up at the Juan Santamaría International Airport, in San Jose, the capital.

"We think so," he said, heading for the Finca Rosa Blanca hotel, north of the city. "It's because we have no military," he continued. "The money goes instead for schools, high school and colleges, and for health care and doctors. And it's all free," he said.

See COSTA on Page 5E



TNS/STEVE HAGGERTY
A half-hour's hike from Pacuare Lodge leads to a hidden waterfall in the rain forests of Costa Rica.

Construction, changes await Scandinavia visitors

Anyone traveling in Scandinavia this year will find a region that's investing productively in itself. Numerous urban, cultural and transit projects are underway, continuing the Scandinavian devotion to quality of life for residents and visitors alike. Here are some newsworthy notes to keep in mind as you travel in the region in 2018.

In Denmark's capital city, a massive subway project is creating havoc above ground, but when completed in 2019, a new circular line will make sightseeing in Copenhagen's city center a breeze. Several museums are being rebuilt or renovated. The Museum of Copenhagen will reopen later this year in a new building; the Museum of Danish Resistance, long shuttered because of a devastating fire, will be back in late 2019; and the National Gallery of Denmark is renovating, but staying open through most of the work.

Major construction is also ongoing in some of Denmark's other large cities. In Aarhus, a new light rail line just opened. In Odense, the Hans Christian Andersen Museum is being completely rebuilt and will reopen in 2020. In the meantime, travelers can visit a temporary mu-

TRAVEL IN EUROPE



RICK STEVES

seum space, the home where Andersen was born, and his childhood home.

In Oslo, Norway, the urban streetscape continues to evolve, with a five-mile harbor promenade now running nearly the entire length of the city's waterfront. The historic Grand Cafe at the Grand Hotel is open again after renovation, and still has beautiful old artwork, including a mural showing Norwegian literary and artistic legends from a century ago. The National Gallery, home to magnificent works by celebrated Norwegian artists, is scheduled to close in fall 2019. The collection will move to the new National Museum being built near the harbor, where it will be joined, in 2020, by a brand-

See STEVES on Page 5E



Rick Steves Europe/SUZANNE KOTZ
Scandinavia continues to expand its enviable public transportation systems; one example is this slick new subway station in Stockholm.

pressreader

PRINTED AND DISTRIBUTED BY PRESSREADER
PressReader.com • 1 800 278 6648
COPYRIGHTS RESERVED BY APPLICABLE LAW



THIS/STEVE HAGGERTY

River runners rafting to Pacuare Lodge encounter easy class 2 rapids getting there, and when they leave, heart-pounding class 4 and 5 rapids downstream.

Costa

Continued from Page 4E

"Of course, there are always people who don't want to work and are tempted to steal. But most people here have jobs," he added as we reached the hotel, a restored, 14-suite Spanish Colonial house and coffee plantation, with a pool and a popular open-air restaurant.

On time for the day's coffee plantation tour, we thought we'd learn about coffee. But the two-hour uphill walk with naturalist Marcelo Munoz was as much about sustainable farming as it was about a good cup of joe.

Guiding us among the coffee trees, planted in volcanic soil between banana and potato trees in a mixed-species forest, Munoz explained that "trees add important nutrients" to the soil. "A mix of sun and shade grows better 'cherries' (coffee beans) than the big commercial farms do," he said.

That evening, as the sun slipped between the palm fronds and Miguel, the hotel waiter, came around with menus, I decided to see what he'd say. "Uh, Miguel, why do people say Costa Rica is Cen-

tral America's safest country?" "Because we don't have an army," he said. "After the civil war, in 1949, the government decided that paying for education, hospitals, culture and parks was more important than guns and soldiers."

Local police handle regional crime and a national government-supported 70-man team of "commandos," a trained "security and intervention" group, is available for extreme emergencies. But beyond that, no army.

In Costa Rica, we learned, education, health and the environment are more than a campaign promise. They are the framework for a peaceful future.

No wildlife conversation lasted more than 10 minutes before the topic turned to Costa Rica's many species, and how they have adapted to the country's 12 climate zones, each at a different altitude, from sea level to the summit of frosty, 12,533-foot Cerro Chirripo Volcano.

Rafting through the Pacuare River's narrow gorge, to Pacuare Lodge on the river bank, we could see the difference between the trees along the river gorge and those on the

mountain side above, where the howler monkeys live.

Alone in the forest, Pacuare Lodge is self-sustaining (electricity is limited to several hours daily), rustic and luxurious. Candles light the upstairs bar and hall, and the dining room downstairs and adjoining deck, where all meals are served. Most of the bungalows have some screened walls, bringing the outside in. The first group was built along the river; the luxury suites climb the hill, each a five-star tree house.

Our days were busy with discovery hikes, wildlife prowls and trips to the nearby indigenous village, with an occasional plunge pool dip and nap in our hammock. Leisurely dinners with like-minded guests made the rain forest silence that much more serene.

A startling contrast, indeed, to our next destination, Nayara Springs Resort, on a highway near Arenal Volcano National Park, in central Costa Rica. Greeted by a uniformed bell boy, we thought we'd made a wrong turn.

But this popular vacation village and honeymoon retreat only masquerades as a hotel. In fact, it offers urban sophis-



THIS/STEVE HAGGERTY

Pacuare Lodge, a National Geographic-designated Unique Lodge of the World, was built of local wood among rain forest trees on the Pacuare River and includes a central hall, lobby bar and an indoor-outdoor dining area. Over 18 guest cottages range from thatched bungalows to luxurious suites.

The nitty gritty

IF YOU GO: Scott Dunn Personal Journeys, a leader in the newest trend in travel, researches, plans and books personalized vacations and adventures. scottdunn.com. All lodging prices may vary with discounts, dates and availability.

THE LODGES: At Finca Flosa Blanca, double rooms start at \$254 per night; fincabrasilanca.com/en At Pacuare Lodge, rates for two in a bungalow with meals, most recreation and non-alcoholic beverages start at \$795; threethree nights are recommended.

GOING THERE: Fly into Juan Santamaría International Airport, in San Jose. For Villa Manzu, in Guanacaste Province, fly into Liberia Airport.

ification in a rain forest setting. With its sumptuous suites — and swimming pools, shaded patios, bars and pubs, a spa and gym, restaurants and shops — connected by a maze of heavily landscaped serpentine paths, each is hidden from the next. A five-minute walk beneath the trees — with resident birds and 30-watt slots overhead — was a stroll in the woods.

As our Scott Dunn-planned trip ended, we said goodbye to our driver, Andreas, who delivered us to Villa Manzu. And there was the mansion, overlooking the ocean, a modern, sandy-colored stone building flanked by grassy lawns and trees, pools and patios. Art and artifacts lined the corridors and walls. The kitchen-plus-bar stools adjoined the living and dining rooms; the theater, two bars, party room and eight luxurious bedrooms with bath completed the luxury.

A path to the cliff-side barbecue circle faced the sunset.

With a staff of 12, including butler and three chefs, this luxurious hideaway, on five acres, guarantees privacy for those who can afford it: celebrities, tech-company millionaires, movie moguls, industry tycoons and sports pros. For us, being there was dumb luck.

"Make yourself at home," said our hostess, with a warm hug. "Take in the scenery," or join us in the pool; it's heated. "Meet our butler, Luis Moreira, who makes the most marvelous cocktails."

Sit at the kitchen counter and "talk ingredients," with the chefs, or "ask about wine-pairings." Borrow a kayak or fishing gear and "walk down to the beach." Take a car, to visit the Beach Club or play golf — Villa Manzu has guest privileges.

Arrive by yacht and tie up in the harbor. Or fly: "The driver will meet you at the airport." The Villa sleeps 20-plus adults and/or children. Because this is your house, everything's included: Meals, wine, cocktails, snacks, sports equipment, fishing gear, a car, guides, and as always, Costa Rican hospitality.

New York Times Crossword Puzzle

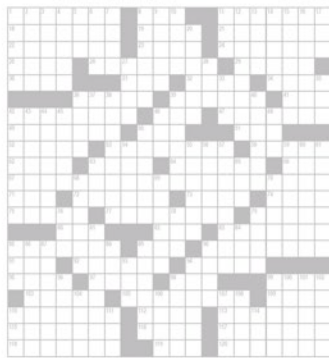
Answers on the next page

No. 0114

SUPREME INTELLIGENCE By Ed Feingersh/Edited by Will Shortz

ACROSS

- 1 Mike who won the 2017 NBA Coach of the Year
8 Presidential advisory
11 Groves
12 Worked on some screenwriting?
19 Major work
21 Like the French, she's an Eric Rohmer and Jean Luc Godard
22 Power
23 Kid's creation out of pillows
24 End of elephant
25 Last monarch of the House of Stuart
26 Destructive sort
29 Photographer Adams
30 Lines in geometry
31 Aristotle's counterpart
32 ... Nix (today)
34 Scandalized
36 Worked from home?
39 Censor communication
41 Big-studying org.
42 Stocked seafood set in La Paz
46 Topic for Sun Tzu
47 Han in a instant
49 Shakespearean king
50 Retard
51 Chair service
52 Military term of address
53 Drove off highway
54 "Twelfth Night" twin
55 This miracle
61 Spa treatment
64 Flower
66 ... Natan (recent label for Jay-Z and J Cole)
67 Began intermission — or what can be found in this party's 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 11th, and 20th rows?
71 Speeches
72 Nosed down of patars
73 Use an ice pack on
74 What a conductor might conduct
75 Online advice
77 Where a big bow is found
79 Induction to how slowly, say
80 Creator of the "Planet Money" podcast
82 Like a book's jacket
83 Bay
84 Two-side
85 Mikanamed
90 Largest insect in the world system
91 Got down
92 Discharge



- 94 Reason for sorrow?
95 They might be backless
97 Fan favorite
98 Frequent theater poster
99 Thick hairstyle
100 For the case at hand
101 Hooded cloak
102 Home to the historic Stone Henge
103 Connection city near New Orleans
104 ... Spin
105 Kind of race
106 Dumb-dumb
107 ... Natan (recent label for Jay-Z and J Cole)
108 Of advice before taking off?
109 Bookish name
110 Brooding sort
111 Higgins-Dues
112 Actor
113 With nominal
114 Immature giant whose name begins with a silent letter
115 Spidee-teenah, with "er"
116 Use for laughs
117 Made-mixed
118 Cuban province where the Castro were born
119 Found (it)
120 Not-pink remover
121 Tanya vase
122 Magazine container
123 Sign of wind on water
124 Covered with water
125 Stock fabrics
126 Closest to hand
127 Dye, as wine
128 Date
129 Random?
130 Jessica of "The Blossomist"
131 Language with six keys
132 Chocolate purchase
133 Language with six keys
134 InIs
135 InIs
136 InIs
137 Dallas pro
138 InIs on what can be changed
139 "I'll right, let's play!"
140 Butcher's stock
141 No-chance for Springsteen
142 Conks
143 Superhero with flicked-out "C"
144 Juice forest?
145 Run of
146 Actor Wheaton
147 ... Natan (recent label for Jay-Z and J Cole)
148 Short-story writer that
149 The slightest margin
150 Shows acromioclavicular
151 Taking action
152 Kid's character who says, "People say I'm not so good, but I'm not so good."
153 Lids-curling every day?
154 What has caps
155 Of those who have been dropped (for now) at many of Stockholm's sights, including the Royal Armory, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Museum of Modern Art
156 Range that's home to the Mark Twain National Forest
157 Unit of 74-Across
158 It stands for January
159 Random?
160 Big name in chips
161 Hank's pla in "Blender"
162 "It what?"
163 It
164 InIs castle town
165 Advice warning
166 "I'm still"
167 "Cokehead"
168 (As most)
169 Like a suit on Dec. 26
170 Short-story writer that
171 The slightest margin
172 Shows acromioclavicular
173 Taking action
174 Kid's character who says, "People say I'm not so good, but I'm not so good."
175 Lids-curling every day?
176 What has caps
177 Of those who have been dropped (for now) at many of Stockholm's sights, including the Royal Armory, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Museum of Modern Art



Rick Snow Europe/CAMERON HEWITT

Oslo's redeveloped waterfront includes a 5-mile-long promenade and stunning architecture.

Staves

Continued from Page 4E

new building for the Edvard Munch Museum. Norway is also working on improvements to its transportation infrastructure. In Bergen, a tram now travels from the city center to the newly remodeled Flesland Airport. Oslo's outlying Moss Rygge Airport is closed; discount airlines now primarily use the even farther Sandefjord Airport, 70 miles south of the city. And construction on the speedy X2000 train line from Oslo to Stockholm will likely interrupt service through 2020 — plan on taking a slower intercity train instead.

Sweden's museums continue to switch back and forth from charging admission to being free — it all depends upon which political party is in power. (As you might imagine, the left wingers want colleges to be free for all, and the right wingers want to put a price on it.) As recent elections brought in a left-leaning majority, admission charges have been dropped (for now) at many of Stockholm's sights, including the Royal Armory, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Museum of Modern Art

and Swedish History Museum.

Several of Stockholm's top attractions are either closed for renovation or in the process of moving, including the Royal Armory (train exhibit halls closed in 2018), Royal Coin Cabinet (moving closed until 2020), Stockholm City Museum (closed until 2019), Saluhall market (closed for renovation) and the National Museum of Fine Arts (reopening in late 2018). Stockholm's new Viking-garden waterfront busts myths about the Vikings. Interactive displays present them as colonizers and traders more than looters and warriors — you won't find a horned helmet in the place.

Sweden's museums continue to switch back and forth from charging admission to being free — it all depends upon which political party is in power. (As you might imagine, the left wingers want colleges to be free for all, and the right wingers want to put a price on it.) As recent elections brought in a left-leaning majority, admission charges have been dropped (for now) at many of Stockholm's sights, including the Royal Armory, Museum of Medieval Stockholm, Museum of Modern Art

glassblowing hotshop. The handy town of Vasjo, convenient to Glass Country, has also perked up, with good restaurants and a high-end hotel.

Like its Scandinavian neighbors, Finland's capital city of Helsinki is undergoing major redevelopment work. Construction on the Hernesaari peninsula just outside the city center (where cruise ships dock) and the West Harbor terminals (with ferry service around the Baltic region) will add green spaces, a mix of residences and recreational amenities to what is now a barren industrial zone. Visitors to Hernesaari can already get a taste of what's to come at the stylishly modern Loyly sauna, with water views and an indoor-outdoor restaurant.

And Iceland, while technically not part of Scandinavia, is now one of Europe's trendiest destinations. It's getting help from its homegrown airline, which offers Americans heading for Europe great stopover incentives. Expect big crowds and book your rooms well in advance — especially if visiting in summer.

The Nordic countries have a lot to offer, and those traveling with the latest information will have a truly rich experience.

