

WOMAN

MAY 2014

FLORAL SCENTS
FOR SPRING

FAMILY
VACATION
FAVORITES

MOTHER'S DAY
MAKEOVER

laV
Reviewed!



*China
Smith*

BALLET AFRIQUE'S FEARLESS LEADER

Contributors

DWAYNE HILLS

PHOTOGRAPHER,
"CHINA SMITH"

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DWAYNE HILLS is a self-taught photographer from New Orleans. He serves as a visual-marketing building resource for small and large businesses, design firms, magazines and authors. Dwayne has had the pleasure of working with companies such as Wells Fargo Bank, IBC Bank, University of Texas at Austin, Velocity Credit Union and Central Market, to name a few. As a member of the Professional Photographers of America, Dwayne has won several first-place awards. In his leisure time, he enjoys reading, eating out and spending time with his family.

HOW DO YOU CAPTURE MOVEMENT?

"The key to capturing and freezing motion is light. Having enough light enables you to use a high shutter speed to freeze a dancer in mid air. For our shoot, I used a 1,600-watt strobe head inside of a 4-foot octabox."

MOLLY MCMANUS

COVER WRITER,
"CHINA SMITH"

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Loving to get lost in the beauty and intricacies of people's stories, **MOLLY MCMANUS** has worked as the associate editor for *Austin Woman* and *ATX Man* for two years, additionally working as a freelance writer and editor. This month, she tells the story of China Smith of Ballet Afrique, inspired by China's dedication to her students, social justice and dance. Molly was especially compelled by China's story, due to her own history of growing up in a multi-racial home and the complexities that race can play within families, the education system and our society at large. When she's not setting pen to paper, you can find Molly reading, eating, drinking, dancing and yogaing her way through town.

WHY IS DANCE SO IMPORTANT TO PERSONAL EXPRESSION?

"Dance is an amazing outlet, allowing you to truly be in the present moment. It rejuvenates and cleanses, lifting the weight of the world to bring you back to yourself."

SARAH QUATRANO

ILLUSTRATOR,
"LAST WORD"

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SARAH QUATRANO is a proud Bostonian, and now New York City rookie. She holds a degree in communication design, specializing in illustration. She loves freelance illustrating for a variety of magazines throughout the country; it gives her new challenges and opportunities every day.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE FAMILY VACATION?

"My favorite family vacation was two summers ago when we went to India. We stayed in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, seeing all of the beautiful landmarks on the way. The Taj Mahal was truly unreal. Experiencing a culture totally different from our own was a life-changing event for all of us, and I would highly recommend it to any adventure seekers out there!"

BECCA HENSLEY

WRITER,
"FAVORITE FAMILY VACATIONS"

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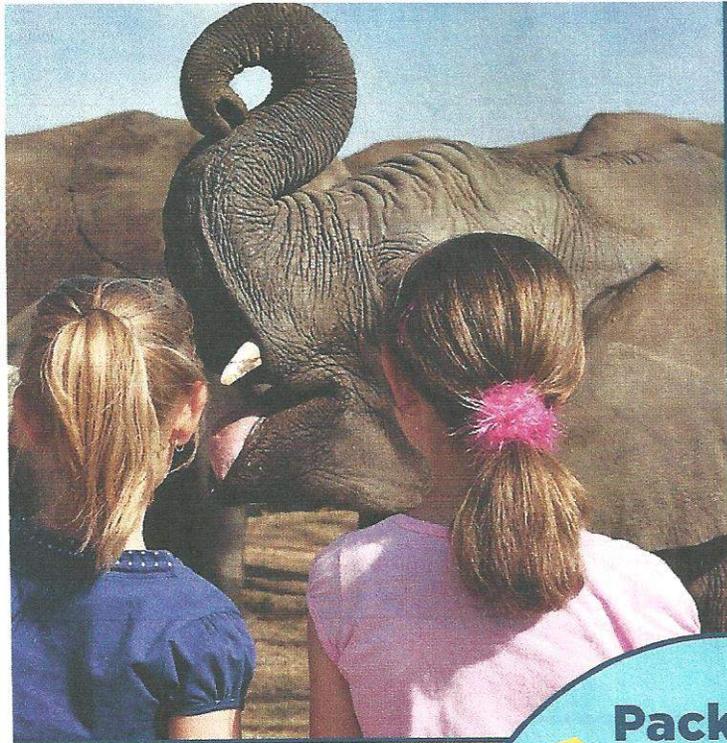
BECCA HENSLEY says, "A good story won't let you stop telling it. It stops you in your tracks and draws you in like laughter in a bar." Austin-based, this award-winning poet, travel and lifestyle writer has what the French call "art de vivre." Becca is published in hundreds of international, regional and national magazines, newspapers and journals, and her stories and dispatches appear frequently in *National Geographic Traveler*, *USA Today*, *Austin Monthly*, *Toronto Star*, *Washington Flyer*, *Organic Spa*, *Bridal Guide* and on the Travel Channel. A peripatetic global pilgrim, she agrees with Confucius, who mused, "Wherever you go, go with all your heart."

IF YOU HAD TO CHOOSE ONE LOCATION FOR AN ANNUAL FAMILY VACATION WHERE WOULD IT BE?

"I grew up in Boulder, Colo., and for me, this is the ultimate family destination. My children love it too. It is the tonic that binds us."

HAVE THE LAST WORD?

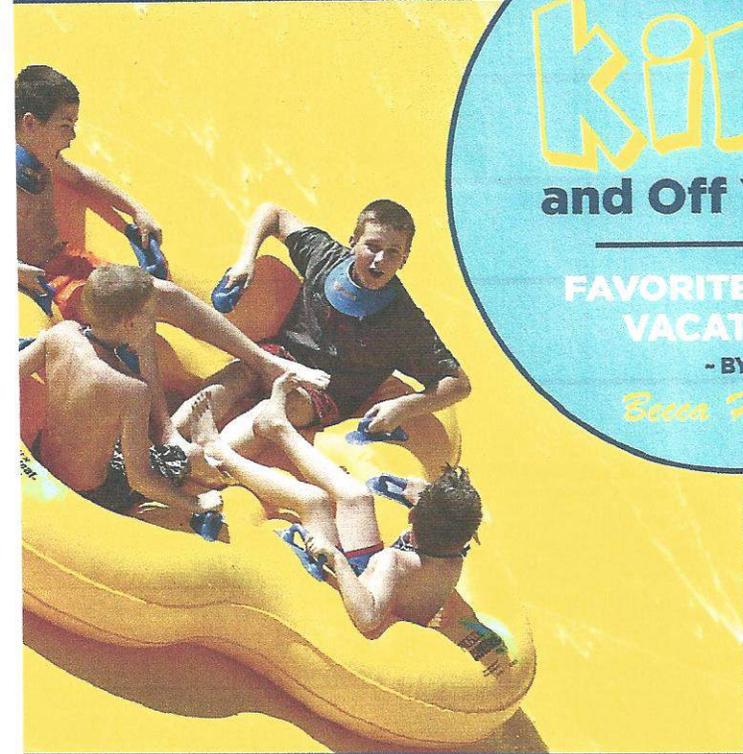
We love hearing your stories. Send in your submissions for our August Last Word column for a chance to be published. To be considered, email 500 words or less to submissions@awmediainc.com by July 1. **August's topic: "Things Money Can't Buy."**



Pack the
KIDS
and Off You Go

FAVORITE FAMILY
VACATIONS

- BY -
Becca Henley



Does the phrase "family vacation" cause you to shudder with fear? It shouldn't. Think of it as a play date with your brood, a simple far-flung foray for folks who live most of their days in urbanity's fast lane. To embark on a jaunt with kids in tow cements bonds and promotes teambuilding. It spikes curiosity, opens hearts and broadens minds. Getaways with the gang incite laughter, increase confidence and build memories. Like a laboratory, family holidays provide a safe place for experimentation, research and inquiry. Thankfully, they vanquish the stress and stolidness of those pesky daily routines. We all need that, right? So, grab the mob and trudge the road with gusto. Throw in a third generation, and the party only increases in value.

THE SAFARI

Cheetahs. Topi. Hyena. Oh my! Step in to the pages of a storybook when you take your kids to Africa on a safari. It's the sort of trip that touches people way down to their core and bores in to their souls. Ernest Hemingway put it like this: "I never knew of a morning in Africa when I woke up and I was not happy." It has that effect on travelers. And kids, the tabula rasa that they are, feel its ancient majesty most of all. Whether you tread to East, South or Central Africa, you'll be rooted in to something more profound than yourself. For families, this ultimate trip offers something for everyone.

"Pedal faster," says Kone, my Maasai guide. He dons a red plaid blanket, wound around his torso to create a kilt-like garment. I'm not sure I comprehend how he can pedal his bike through the black volcanic sand mounds that carpet the road we ride through the Chyulu Hills of Eastern Kenya wearing that. I sport shorts, and still, I struggle to cycle through the morass. But effort's not an issue when the bush offers so much distraction. I crank it up just to not be ensconced amid a flock of ostriches hoofing it past me as if a farmer's ringing a cow bell to call them for dinner. Moments later, a tower of giraffes galumph by and light-as-air

Thompson gazelle spin like ballet dancers in a pas de deux above the earth.

While exploring the open-fenced ranch reserve of OI Donyo Resort, a Relais Chateaux 20-bed lodge pinched in to the slopes of the mountains, I also walk through the bush with a guide, ending my hike with a white-tablecloth picnic breakfast beneath Acacia trees, and ride horses across the bush. When not traversing the bush, I take a seat in OI Donyo's branch-covered hide, positioned just feet from an elephant watering hole. Families love sitting here for hours to glimpse giraffes, warthogs and the parades of elephants in attendance. Kids learn about local culture with an immersion visit to the local Maasai village located nearby, learning to sing, dance and make local bead crafts.

While some might fear bringing children to Africa, a variety of outfitters will put those anxieties to rest with well-laid plans, bespoke services and 24/7 attentiveness. Micato Safaris, a family-owned and -operated outfitter based in Kenya, has tested their family safaris on their own grandchildren. Instituting an all-encompassing adventure called Family-to-Family

Safari, Micato personalizes itineraries, delivering families only to lodges approved and tested by their own kin. While there's no age requirement for a safari, children who wish to go on game drives should be old enough to sit still and stay quiet (if animals are spotted) on the two- to four-hour ventures.

"That depends from child to child," says Denis Simi, a Micato guide, "but, generally, we feel 7 is a great age to begin."

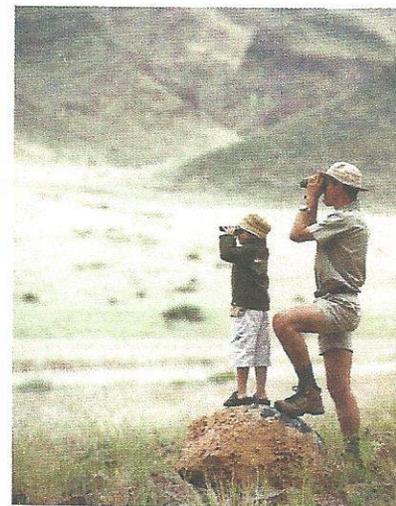
Kids disinterested in the sometimes arduous and occasionally unfruitful car outings can remain back at the lodges, rooting in to their surroundings. Micato's family safaris encompass pastimes such as junior guide training, African crafts, storytelling, local

music lessons and stargazing. Some of the lodges on Micato's family-sanctioned list even offer elephant- and camel-riding safaris—

the ultimate way to spy lions, cheetahs, leopards and other wildlife. But when the sun sets, its sundowner time, and the whole family convenes to share stories and salute their day well spent in Africa.

For more information, visit micatosafaris.com.

It's the sort of trip that touches people way down to their core and bores in to their souls.



HAWAII

By the time my oldest child was 12, he'd been to Europe every year of his life. But one day, after a three-week driving-trip marathon that resembled a marriage between *National Lampoon's European Vacation* and Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*, he balked. "Mom," he asked, "next trip, can we please go somewhere where girls wear bikinis?"

And so our annual pilgrimage to Hawaii as a family began. This was a place I had lived for a few years as a child and knew to be a rich amalgam of culture. And though part of the United States, Hawaii is a locale rooted in its own Polynesian sense of place. Enough of a romp in a foreign setting, yet recognizable enough to make parents feel secure, Hawaii is a paradise that surpasses the visions conjured by your imagination. This mid-Pacific state of seven unique islands offers abundant diversions borne from land and sea.

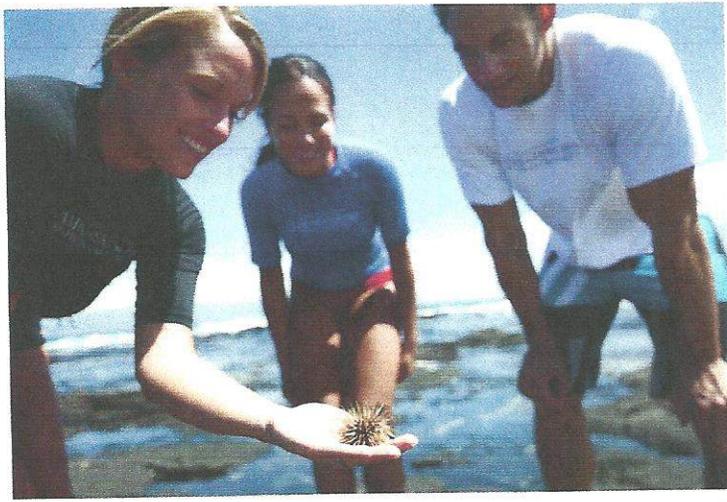
Which island? That's the question most first-timers ask. The correct answer depends on the travelers because every island embodies a distinct version of that picture-postcard stereotype of hula dancers, coconut palms, pineapple groves, ukulele music and surfer dudes aplenty. Take Oahu, the state's first tourist hub, which boasts the bustling city of Honolulu and the legendary playground of Waikiki Beach. A stellar starter island for its Asian-fusion food scene, iconic hotels, urban hiking paths and renowned beach boys who can guarantee

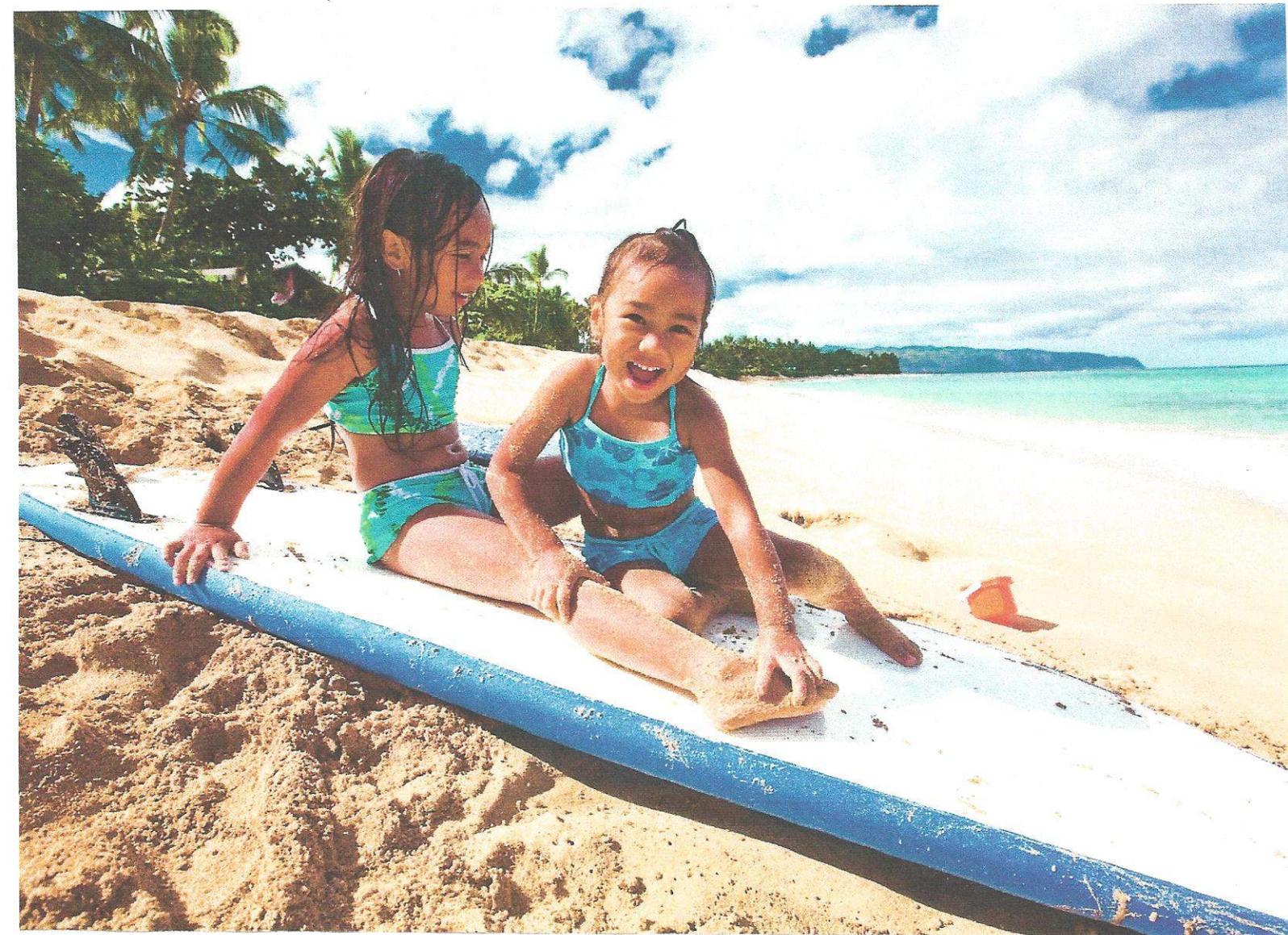
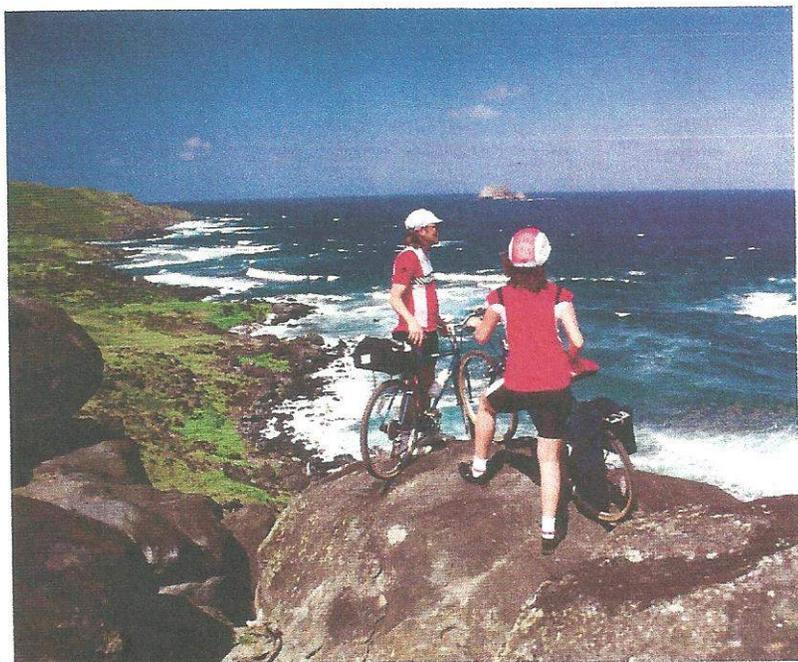
Enough of a romp in a foreign setting, yet recognizable enough to make parents feel secure

you successfully catch a wave with the prowess of Duke Kahanamoku after just one lesson, Oahu also has more tranquil settings. Don't miss Hanauma Bay near the city, but consider basing at the J.W. Marriott Ihilani Ko Olina Resort & Spa, a lagoon-fronted retreat on Oahu's sun-dappled Western shore. Kid activities range from scavenger hunts, to volcano making, and the water's limpid stillness ensures safe swim outings.

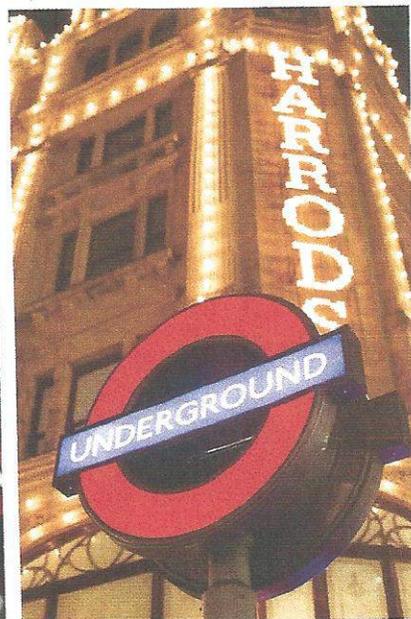
With good reason, many families pick Maui. Sunrise atop dormant Haleakala volcano, a drive along the Hana Road, splashing in the sea at Ho'okipa Beach Park, whale and dolphin cruises and top-notch resorts comprise the agenda. At Fairmont Kea Lani in Wailea, families delve in to Hawaii's heritage with an early morning outrigger canoe lesson. They'll paddle out to a spot where turtles glide beneath the water's surface and have a chance to snorkel among them before riding the wave back to shore, chanting Hawaiian-style as they go. Stay at the Ritz-Carlton Kapalua on Maui's Northwest side, and sign the kids up as budding oceanographers at the Jean-Michel Cousteau Oceans Futures Society, a program bent on teaching the ancient Hawaiian penchant for responsible interactions in nature. On verdant Kauai, the mood takes a mellow turn. Pack your athletic gear, though, as some of the island's must-do activities include kayaking down the breathtaking Na Pali Coast and trekking the trails of Waimea Canyon. The Big Island, my favorite, stands alone. Awash in black lava fields, it might be the undiscovered outer-space planet. With an active volcano that spews fiery lava and blows smoke, waterfalls and mountains galore, the Big Island vaunts tony resorts like the Four Seasons Hualalai, which proffers complimentary all-day kids programs, including hula and language lessons. Dip into any of its seven pools, but plan to wear your flippers in King's Pond, which stocks 3,500 fish for fool-proof snorkeling.

For more information, visit fairmont.com/lealani, ihilani.com, fourseasons.com/hualala and ritzcarlton.com/kapaluamaui.





LONDON



'The British Airways' daily non-stop flights from Austin to London, our dream of a magic carpet ride across the pond at last comes true. Now it's easier than ever to get a bag, grab the tots and take off for a weekend on Portobello Road. Abundant with personality and cachet, London appeals to everybody's inner Sherlock Holmes—or, if that, your internal

London's a magic wardrobe stuffed with fantastical hotels.

er Pan or mental tin Powers. Trendy, practical, sophisticated and sometimes edgy, London entertains on a host of levels. You will love how those British drive on the "wrong side" of the street in funky London taxis and red double-decker buses. Since most British speak our mother tongue and understand our Texas accent, a journey here asks the ice for first-timers abroad. It's like a playground: You could make the kids do all the stuff you want to do, or you could let them drive the show. Do the latter and you'll find your interests intersect. And, as the child in you re-emerges in ways you never thought possible, you'll see your children mature and develop before your eyes. Although myriad activities await, and each London trip could be as rich as its own layer of prodigious mille-feuille pastry bought at a bakery in Southwark's Borough Market, I have a black-book list of kid-pleasing experiences collected by my own wee clan. Get it off, enjoy a West End show. Both *The King* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* are playing right now. London rivals

Broadway in the theater department, and adults and children alike cheer through these whimsical musicals.

Next, face your fears when you ogle the mummies at the British Museum. There're lots of other distractions there too, like Celtic, farmer-found jewels and the wizened medieval man recovered from a bog. Like to fly?

Board the London Eye, a slow-moving but towering ferris wheel set on the bank of the Thames. Make like oarsmen of yore and

tour the river by mini-cruise. You'll pass under a bevy of bridges—maybe even one you've heard about in a nursery rhyme. At Shakespeare's Globe, rebuilt on the legendary theater's original site, kids can pose and posture as a Shakespearean character while recording their theatrical debut for posterity.

Need to get active? Run, walk, rollerblade or ride horses in Hyde Park, Regent's Park or Green Park. You can feed the ducks there too. Hungry? Load up on picnic supplies at Borough Market, which offers some of the best whole-grain bread and house-made charcuterie on earth. Hit the toy department in Harrods, and then retire to the food floor. To re-energize, we love to take a sack of Harrods-made goodies back to the hotel for casual in-room dining. Need a babysitter? Let the kids watch a movie at Notting Hill's Electric Cinema on Portobello Road while you shop the outdoor trinkets and antique market. At the National History Museum, be awed as the dinosaurs roar and the bug collection makes you feel

itchy just looking at it. Envy the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London, watch silly men in wigs argue at Parliament and hoot and holler at the fairy-tale dressed guards at Buckingham Palace. Tennis buffs will want to take the train to Wimbledon for a tour, and soccer players may want to catch a match (Just be attentive to what colors you wear!). Noshers, don't leave without gulping down a pub lunch, a full English breakfast and a sandwich and sweets during afternoon tea.

For more information, visit visitlondon.com and visitengland.com.

London's a magic wardrobe stuffed with fantastical hotels. Check in to The Grosvenor House Apartments by Jumeirah in Mayfair for an extended stay in an apartment-style room. Your kids receive "Busy Bee" packs loaded with puzzles and activities, and closets come outfitted with toys and surprises for bambinos. At stylish Jumeirah Carlton Tower in Knightsbridge, take advantage of family packages, which offer amenities from cookies and complimentary goggles for the pool to kid-sized bathrobes. A fixture for families for more than a century, The Goring in Belgravia welcomes babes with a passport, a BaaBaa sheep toy and a goodies pack. Their Bedtime Story Library suits Wendy reading to the Lost Boys, and culinary-minded kiddos get invited in to the kitchen to decorate cookies and cakes. While Mom and Dad imbibe at the bar, underagers can tiddle a mocktail that they've helped the bartender create.

For more information, visit thegoring.com and jumeirah.com.

HOUSTON

Did you know it takes more than 400 yards of linen to wrap a mummy? Try getting Mom to do that for your next Halloween costume! But maybe if you take her along to the Houston Museum of Natural Science to glimpse (and shiver at) a real mummy—not to mention ogle a plethora of artifacts that date back more than 5,000 years—you'll be able to convince her that mummification has its virtues. In a complex that holds the Wortham Giant Screen Theater, the Burke Baker Planetarium, the Cockrell Butterfly Center and various permanent exhibition galleries, the new Hall of Ancient Egypt awakens your inner archeologist. Set within the Morian Paleontology Hall, it spans the length of a football field, and recounts the politics, religion and mummy rituals of ancient Egypt.

If mummies don't appeal, Houston's Museum District brims with possibilities. For kids younger than 12, The Children's Museum of Houston proves that learning and playing go hand in hand. Garnering best-in-the-U.S. status from *Parents Magazine* in 2011, this immense indoor playground encompasses

Houston's Museum District brims with possibilities

90,000 feet of interactive, innovative, bilingual exhibits—all housed in a fairytale-like structure by Robert Venturi. Play make-believe mayor, grocer or accountant at Kidtropolis, a tot-friendly city that recreates the mommy and daddy world of work and play. Or dabble with electricity, build pretend buildings, dance or explore *Dragons & Fairies*, a special exhibit (through November 2014), which intermingles modern-day life in Vietnam and centuries-old myths and tall tales from the region. Note: both museums offer free admission on Thursdays from 5 to 8 p.m. Other ideas: The Houston Zoo and the Museum of Fine Arts both offer a bevy of family programs.

Feeling antsy? Work off the fidgets trekking Houston's 11-mile labyrinth of subterranean tunnels. In the spirit of Indiana Jones, Houston Urban Adventures leads a tour that rambles beneath the earth (www.houstonurbanadventures.com). Conversely, take to the stars at Houston Space Center, where future astronauts can delve in to a trove of space buff-approved activities. Intergalactic arenas and "that giant leap for mankind" take on new meaning with the VIP Level 9 Tour, a reservation-only, half-day expedition that goes behind the scenes of Mission Control (www.spacecenter.org).

