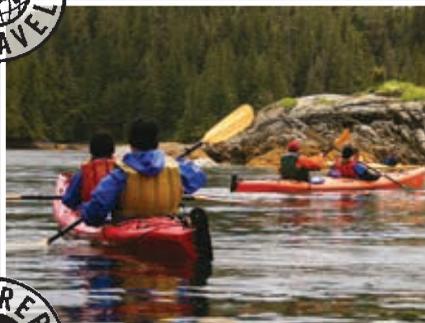




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**OWNER'S
COLUMN**

Keeping current on the multitude of destinations, ships, river boats, tours, hotels and resorts is a never-ending task. Our agents study, attend meetings and webinars, network with peer groups, and learn from their travel.

Here is a sampling of the travel our agents have experienced in just the last two months. Our travel experience is one of our clients' greatest benefits.

Our learning experiences continue throughout the year, benefiting Wayfarer travelers.

*Happy Traveling,
Laura*

HELEN'S VIVA LA CUBA TRAVEL EXPERIENCE

Having just returned from a cruise on the Fathom Adonia to Cuba, I am still feeling the excitement of the experience.

Any tour to Cuba by a U.S. citizen must include a people-to-people element. This means interacting with the Cuban people. They are very warm, welcoming and anxious to practice their English. What I expected versus experienced were very different. Old Havana has been completely refurbished, it's beautiful and colorful. The buildings are colorful, and the streets are spotless, with live music being played everywhere

The distinctly Caribbean spirit is evident in every aspect of the Afro-Cuban life. Its diverse architecture

ranges from the fortress of Castillo del Morro to the red-domed towers of the Basilica. It was here in Santiago de Cuba that the well-known battle of San Juan Hill

was fought and now it is the site of many monuments to the heroes of that battle.

This visit was a great learning experience; for the Cuban culture, people, food, history, and so much more!



MELISSA SAILS ON THE WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIP

This past November, I had the privilege of sailing aboard the world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's *Harmony of the Seas*. I was surprised by the expedient check-in procedure for a ship this size.

Onboard, the ship never felt crowded. Theaters were large and public spaces more than ample to ensure that everyone can enjoy all this ship has to offer. The entertainment options were plentiful, well done,



and backed by a talented group of performers who left me wishing the show could go on just a bit longer. For children, teens and the young at heart, the *Harmony* amps up the fun with activities such as rock climbing, zip lining, a water park complete with multiple water slides, surf simulators, and mini golf, just to name a few! The centerpiece of this vast array of activity is the Abyss, a one-of-a-kind dual chute slide, which spirals riders at lightning speed down a 10-story drop.

MIMI'S DANUBE RIVER CRUISE

I recently returned from a riverboat cruise on the Danube that was one of my best trips ever. The trip began in Budapest on October 25 and I originally thought it would be too late in the season. Was I ever wrong! I found a boat with one third of the guests it normally has, fewer boats on the river,

and fewer tourists in each port. With warm clothes we had very pleasant tours in each city.

We had wonderful hotel stays in Budapest and Prague at each end of our trip, with a seven-night cruise in the middle. It was a great way to visit five countries and

learn a lot about each.





AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES TO BEGIN SAILING TO HAVANA, CUBA

American travelers have long imagined what it would be like to salsa, mambo and rumba the night away in Havana's many clubs or sit down for an authentic *ropa vieja* (shredded beef) and *moros y cristianos* (rice and beans). The tide has turned as Azamara Club Cruises, known for its premier destination-immersive voyages, introduces an itinerary visiting Havana, Cuba.

On an Azaleas, Bourbon Street and Havana journey departing March 21, 2017, *Azamara Quest* will begin 13-night sailings in the Caribbean, making Azamara one of the first American luxury cruise lines to visit Havana. The voyage will include visits to Key West and Tampa Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana (two overnights); Cozumel, Mexico; and an overnight stay in Havana. In time, Azamara looks toward adding more ports of call in Cuba into several of its itineraries.



SAPPHIRE FALLS RESORT OPENS AT UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT™

With the opening of Loews Sapphire Falls Resort, Universal Orlando Resort park-goers now have a choice of five on-site hotels in which to relax and recharge.

The new Caribbean-inspired resort transports guests to a paradise where blue waterfalls cascade across lush grounds; a luxuriously landscaped 16,000-square-foot, resort-style pool serving as its centerpiece. One of the special features of the 1,000-room hotel are water taxis, which shuttle guests to and from Universal's CityWalk complex and its two theme parks.

Guests of Sapphire Falls also enjoy early park admission to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter™ one hour before the theme park opens.

PRINCESS CRUISES TEAMS WITH CHEF EMMANUEL RENAUT ON NEW RESTAURANT



Princess Cruises has announced a partnership with three Michelin star Chef Emmanuel Renaut to develop the cruise line's next specialty restaurant concept, "La Mer – A French Bistro by Emmanuel Renaut," which will debut aboard *Majestic Princess* in April 2017, the cruise line's newest ship

tailored for the China market.

The announcement comes on the heels of another new relationship with Michelin star Chef Richard Chen, who will be serving his interpretation of classic Cantonese dishes at the specialty restaurant Harmony. The *Majestic Princess* will now be the only cruise ship that offers two specialty dinner menus designed by Michelin-star chefs at sea in China.

Following its inaugural voyage, the *Majestic Princess* will begin cruising from its home port of Shanghai on July 11, 2017, carrying 3,560 guests to a variety of destinations in Japan and Korea.



CRYSTAL AIRCRUISES ELEVATES LUXURY TO NEW HEIGHTS

In fall 2017, the world's newest and largest private jet takes to the skies, introducing an unrivaled new manner of global exploration, complete with Crystal Skye Butlers, Michelin star-inspired cuisine, and a host of world-class amenities.

Aboard Crystal AirCruises' customized Boeing 777-200LR aircraft, 84 adventurers will have the opportunity to visit the world's most coveted destinations, both exotic and remote, with a boutique collection of 15- to 29-day all-inclusive journeys around the world. Guests will spend an average of two to three nights in each destination, staying at the finest hotels, resorts, safari lodges and eco-villages, chosen for their ideal location, luxury service and unique connection to the culture of the surrounding landscapes. Crystal's 2017 and 2018 global itineraries for its privately owned jet are now open for booking.



EATALY WORLD, ITALY'S 20-ACRE GOURMET THEME PARK, SLATED TO OPEN IN 2017

Italian Farming Factory (FICO) is currently developing a 20-acre gourmet amusement park, slated to open in Bologna, Italy in September 2017.

The complex promises to showcase 108,000 square feet of orchards, gardens and pastures, as well as 40 different workshops where guests can watch pasta and cheeses being made. In addition to chatting with local artisans and making pasta, there will be 25 restaurants to sate the appetite.

According to Tiziana Primori, CEO of FICO and manager of the project, Bianchi three-wheel bicycles with special shopping baskets will be available to ride through the park, which includes a truffles area, oil mills, citrus greenhouses and an artisanal beer factory. Primori projects that six million tourists will visit the theme park annually.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST CRUISE SHIP MAKES ITS DEBUT

In November, with a sail away celebration befitting the world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean International's brand new vessel, *Harmony of the Seas*, departed on its maiden voyage from its new permanent home port of Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Harmony combines the iconic seven neighborhood concept that sister ships *Oasis of the Seas* and *Allure of the Seas* are known for, with some of the most modern and groundbreaking amenities and offerings that will appeal to guests of all ages. Extra features include The Ultimate Abyss, a dramatic 10-story-tall slide. The 5,497-passenger *Harmony* will sail year round on seven-night Eastern and Western itineraries.

TRAVELING TIMES
MAKING IDEAS TRAVEL FASTER
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GLORIOUS DAYS AT SEA

By Judie Karhan

Crystal Cruises



Star Clippers



Norwegian Cruise Line



In the glamorous days of trans-Atlantic cruising during the early 1900s, the shipboard social swirl created a wave of excitement on the high seas. Au courant travelers reveled in the luxurious, stylish surroundings of graceful vessels such as Cunard Line's Mauretania and Queen Mary, which provided extravagant spaces at sea.

Today, their legacy remains alive and well. Ships displaying all the grandeur of four- and five-star hotels, with exceptional spas, private verandahs, impeccable personalized service and lavish interiors have revived the celebration of shipboard life. These floating resorts have become destinations in themselves, with fabulous social areas designed to bedazzle and be dazzling in.

A Dizzying Array of Activities

Aboard the newest of the large ships, today's passengers enjoy guest amenities on a grand scale, with elaborate stage performances, casino gaming, fine dining experiences, and – most especially – an incredible array of activities.

When Royal Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas* made its debut in 1999, the vessel became the largest ship in the world. Carrying up to 3,840 passengers, the *Voyager of the Seas* introduced a wide range of innovative, never-before-seen recreational facilities, including the industry's first rock-climbing wall, an

ice-skating rink and roller-blading track. The cruise line's newest ships feature even more first-at-sea onboard activities, such as FlowRider, a surf simulator; RipCord by iFLY, the first skydiving experience at sea; and Xbox Live, offering an unprecedented bandwidth and ultrafast wireless capabilities.

With so many activities now available for ship passengers, kids love cruising more than ever. Disney Cruise Line has gone a long way in bringing the concept of family cruising into the spotlight. All Disney ships offer separate areas and age-specific activities for kids, babysitting services, teen recreation centers, even staterooms configured especially for families. Norwegian Cruise Line boasts having the widest choice of accommodations at sea, with the largest and most interconnecting suites and staterooms to fit families of any size, so you can keep your crew together.

Refining the Concept of Luxury

Perhaps your idea of the perfect vacation is getting away from the crowds. Small luxury ships, such as those operated by Regent Seven Seas, Seabourn and Crystal Cruises, elevate and redefine the traditional notions of luxury cruising with innovative concepts, exquisitely designed ships, customized destination immersion, and the highest standards of personalized service.

Climb aboard a vessel carrying just a few hundred passengers and you'll find an incredibly welcoming staff, all-suite accommodations with ocean views, and gourmet dining menus created by celebrated and world-renowned chefs. Most importantly, you'll enjoy all-inclusive pricing. Dining venues are complimentary – dine where, when and with whom you wish. Unlimited beverages, including premium spirits, beer and fine wines, are complimentary as

well. Tipping is neither required nor expected.

In addition to all of the special amenities aboard a small ship, luxury cruise lines specialize in offering unique itineraries to must-see cities and hidden gems where larger ships cannot go.

Romancing the Sea

Yacht-like ships carrying no more than 350 passengers offer unusually warm and friendly environments. Though daily activities may not include singles get-togethers or Broadway-style revues, sailing ships offer plenty to passengers, including special enrichment lectures, onboard water sports platforms, and excellent cuisine.

Sailing on a small ship is a romantic adventure. As you sail from shore to shore, idle days are spent lazing in the sun – swimming, snorkeling, water skiing, jet skiing, or even having a personal hand at the sails. Tropical nights are spent gazing at bright shining stars and chatting amicably among newfound friends. It doesn't take long to get acquainted with the natural rhythm of the sea.

There are, of course, some variations when it comes to sailing vessels. Certain ships, such as those of Windstar Cruises, seem more akin to floating five-star hotels. Others, such as Star Clippers' tall ships, evoke images of the original swift clipper ships of the 19th century – elegant yet small and appealingly simplified.

Whether you set sail to explore exotic, distant lands or find bliss closer to home along rugged coastlines or amid tropical islands, your shipboard experiences will be as much a barometer of satisfaction as the destinations in themselves. So pack your party shoes – or your deck-ready sneakers – and enjoy those glorious days at sea.

RCI's RipCord by iFLY





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LAURA TOURS ITALY

In late fall, I traveled with a group of girlfriends to Tuscany, our #1 destination in Italy. We spent five days in the countryside in a Historical Residence, lovingly restored into a deluxe hotel. The location is perfect for touring all the medieval villages in Tuscany and Umbria while still

enjoying the beauty and tranquility of the Tuscan countryside. We ended in Florence, where we toured the Vasari Corridor, a passageway connecting the Palazzo Vecchio with the Pitti Palace, which is not always open to the public. The rest of our time was spent eating and shopping. I can't get enough of this beautiful city.



DEBRA AND LAURA IN AMSTERDAM & FRANCE

Last month we spent four days in Amsterdam. We inspected five of the cities' top hotels, visited museums and charming neighborhoods, and took a day trip to the windmills and Edam for some cheese! Then, it was off

to Cannes where we attended the International Luxury Travel Market, a prestigious "by invitation only" conference where between us we met with over 100 specialty tour operators and hoteliers from all over the world - a valuable learning experience.



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Far East Reflections

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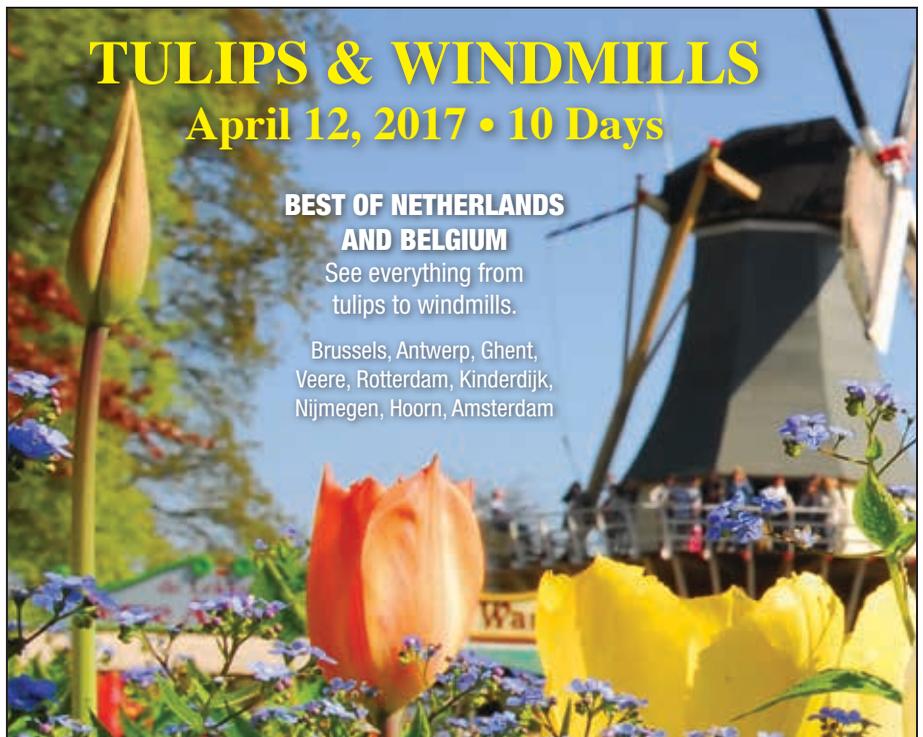
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DICK SAILS ON AN INAUGURAL VOYAGE

Very much enjoyed a U.S. inaugural cruise on the new *Regent Seven Seas Explorer*. Having sailed on Regent before, it was reassuring to see the consistency in their high standards. The ship's ambience was warm and welcoming. Their claim to having the cruise industry's highest space ratio per guest is apparent, with spacious staterooms, relaxed and roomy sitting areas in public spaces, and even a comfortable

sitting area with TV in the launderette. The pool area is well-designed with cushy wicker lounges, dual hot tubs, and plenty of shade to just relax out of the sun.

Regent's reputation in the culinary area continues with eight different themed open-seating restaurants and a state-of-the-art Arts Kitchen for hands-on cooking classes. The nightly entertainment was fun-filled and really enjoyable.



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CHARMING CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

By Gretchen Zauner

A trip to Charleston, one of America's most historic and time-honored cities, is like taking a giant leap back in time – to a place where charming traditions are still practiced and the folks are friendly. Here, historic homes have been lovingly restored and gardens are meticulously tended. You can even take a horse-drawn carriage ride to enjoy the sites that have shaped Charleston to be the place it is today.

A visitor must-see is the Historic District of Charleston, which encompasses more than 2,000 buildings. Shop in the Old City Market or explore the grounds of Fort Sumter National Historic Park, where some of the settlement's earliest fortifications were located. You'll see where the first shots of the Civil War were fired and learn about Fort Sumter's role. A harbor boat trip to is another pleasant way to see the fort and its environs.

If you should find yourself on the spooky side of Charleston's Historic District at night, you can take a

walking tour inside the gates of Charleston's oldest graveyards, or explore The Holy City's streets, cemeteries, back alleys and churches. If you dare to delve further, go on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Old City Jail, which housed some of Charleston's most infamous criminals, 19th-century pirates and Civil War prisoners.

For a more serene way to enjoy the city, stroll through the lovely

gardens of the Charleston Magnolia Plantation and Gardens. Founded in 1676 by the Drayton family, Magnolia Plantation has survived the centuries and witnessed the history of our nation unfold before it, from the American Revolution through the

Civil War and beyond. It is the oldest public tourist site in the Lowcountry, and is home to the earliest public gardens in America, opening its doors to visitors in

1870 to view the thousands of beautiful flowers and plants on its famous grounds.

Just outside the city of Charleston lies Boone Hall Plantation. This 1681 working plantation is known for its moss-draped, three-quarter-mile Avenue of Oaks and original slave cabins. Boone Hall is the only plantation in the South Carolina Lowcountry to offer a live presentation of the unique Gullah Culture, which was cultivated by African slaves.

Downtown Charleston



Azalea Bridge

CITY GEMS OF SCOTLAND: GLASGOW & EDINBURGH

By Gretchen Zauner

In the imagination of travelers, Scotland is perhaps best seen as the land of Highlands allure – where dramatic, lush green mountains and rugged coastlines dominate a landscape punctuated with romantic castles. But those who look further for citified pleasures also find many hidden gems.

Edinburgh, the country's capital, deserves its reputation as being one of the most enthralling cities in the world. Since the establishment of world-famous University of Edinburgh in 1582, the city has basked in scholarly excellence. It has also achieved the status of being a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is known as the leading festival city in the world, buzzing with a sense

of excitement not only during the summer festivals, but throughout the year. Travelers who visit during the month of August might have the opportunity to witness the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, featuring nearly one thousand musicians, pipers, drummers, singers and dancers who create a fantastic display on the Edinburgh Castle Esplanade.

Cobbled medieval streets pave the way for exploration of Edinburgh's many historic sites. Follow the Royal Mile, which runs through the heart of the city's Old Town connecting the magnificent Edinburgh Castle, perched high on a base of volcanic rock, with the splendid Palace of Holyroodhouse resting in the shadow of an

extinct volcano – Arthur's Seat. Peppered with attractions, such as The Real Mary King's Close and the Scottish Storytelling Centre, historical sites including St Giles' Cathedral, and some of the best eating and drinking spots in the city, the Royal Mile offers much to see and do.

Glasgow, Scotland's largest city, displays a vibrant art culture, with scores of galleries and museums. It is also home to one of Scotland's most revered castles. Until the 1800s, Stirling Castle guarded what was the farthest downstream crossing of the River Forth. Many significant events took place there, including the crowning of Mary,

Queen of Scots in 1542. Perched atop Castle Hill and surrounded on three sides by steep cliffs, Stirling had a strong defensive advantage; it withstood at least eight sieges, including several during the Wars of Scottish Independence. Views from the battlements overlook two great battlefields: Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn.

Trendy Glasgow is recognized as one of the best shopping destinations outside of London, filled with designer boutiques and high-end shops. The biggest brands and major retailers can be found in Glasgow's Style Mile – a square in the very center of Glasgow which houses an extraordinary concentration of shops.

Edinburgh Castle



Glasgow



GREAT AMERICAN CRUISING

By Dorothy Crouch

While the storied tales of the “Great American Road Trip” once inspired travelers to journey across the country, this type of long-haul automobile adventure has taken a backseat to other travel methods since the beginning of the 21st century. As extensive road trips have become less frequent, travelers are now hitting the water for unforgettable travel experiences.

Interest in reducing their carbon footprints and the desire to relax while visiting many regions during a vacation have led travelers to seek more economical journeys that afford greater variety. Though river cruising was once a late 19th- and early 20th-century luxury reserved for wealthy travelers within the United States, the advent of motor travel shifted the demand away from vacations along rolling rivers and expansive lakes – until recently. The need to find alternatives to exploring great Americana has allowed river and lake cruising to experience a revival. These unique journeys through the Great Lakes afford respite from the bustle of everyday life, reconnection with American culture, and an opportunity to experience the country’s different regions from the comfort of luxurious accommodations on the water.

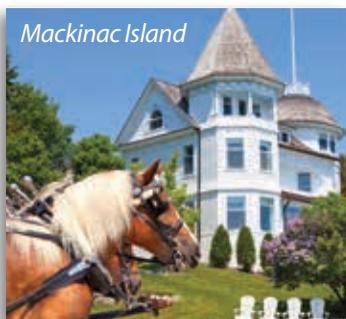
Life on the Lake

Visitors to the region are afforded many options to explore the area, yet Great Lakes Cruise Company stands out as the option that boasts options to suit every traveler, whether discerning, adventurous, or a bit of both. Its ships include different amenities aboard each, such as spas, balconies, theatres, and libraries, for guests who seek the small-ship Great Lake cruising adventure, enhanced by a luxury experience.

As the third largest of the five bodies of water, Lake Michigan also enjoys status as the only Great Lake that is completely located within the United States. Measuring 22,300 square miles, the lake boasts challenging dunes and archipelagos, such as Beaver Island and the Manitou Islands. Though the Michigan Maritime Museum educates visitors about the region’s shipping industry, almost 50 lighthouses line the coast, affording safety to vessels on the water.

En route to Lake Huron from Lake Michigan, travelers often enjoy exploring Mackinac Island for a unique, regional experience. Mackinac Island provides a slower pace and simple indulgences that are often forgotten during the rush of today’s busy lifestyles. Enjoy horseback riding, sailing, kayaking or biking through Mackinac Island State Park.

Comprising more than 80 percent of the area, the park affords perfect respite for nature lovers. As *Condé Nast Traveler*’s “Best Small Hotel in the World” for three years, the Hotel Iroquois seems to have been



Mackinac Island



Turnip Rock



Fort Gratiot Lighthouse



Main Street on Mackinac Island

handpicked from a turn-of-the-20th-century New England-based storybook tale. Providing simple, yet luxurious accommodations to travelers since 1904, Hotel Iroquois is quaint, with 46 comfortable guest rooms, all of which offer a queen or king bed.

Moving eastward, travelers experience sailing through Lake Huron, which replaced the French La Mer Douce. Named for the Huron Native Americans, this Great Lake not only meets Lake Michigan to the west, but also Lake Superior to the north. This second largest of the Great Lakes includes a surface area of 23,000 square miles. Its waters are known to be some of the most dangerous, which often threatened the thriving trade business in the region. Ideal for adventurous scuba divers, the lake serves as a grave to more than 1,000 shipwrecks. Despite its history as a dangerous waterway, Lake

Huron is home to 30 lighthouses, including Fort Gratiot Lighthouse. As the Great Lakes’ oldest operating lighthouse, the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse was established in 1825 as the first on Lake Huron. It is now the oldest surviving lighthouse in Michigan, welcoming ships to the St. Clair River and visitors to explore its grounds.

Farther east, Lake Erie – whose name has origins from the Native American tribe that resided on its shores – is the eleventh largest lake in the world. Though it has served as part of the great transportation and shipping industries in the region, it is also known for its beaches and nature watching. Outdoor enthusiasts might encounter raptors, muskrat, turtles, and hawks. Within Lake Erie, visitors can explore the islands of this body of water. Put-in-Bay, Ohio, a two-by-four-mile island, has been a destination for travelers since the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Today, Put-in-Bay remains a refuge for visitors, offering a welcoming bar scene, comfortable hotels, and activities for every travel style.

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