

Hostels, shared hotel rooms take root in U.S.

By Elaine Glusac, New York Times

Hostels, budget havens of the post-college European travel circuit, traditionally offer bare-bones bunks in communal dormitories. Now for those whose tastes have graduated beyond the backpacking years but whose finances have not, a new breed of hybrid hostel sprouting up on this side of the Atlantic bundles better design, lively bars and restaurants and even some private rooms, all still nicely priced.

Most of those travelers are millennials – 70 percent globally. This travel-loving generation is fueling the expansion of hostels, bargain hotel brands like Tru by Hilton and shared accommodations like Airbnb.

But unlike whole home or apartment rentals, the new hostels make social interaction central to the stay, particularly through food and drink but also concerts, art exhibits and shared work spaces.

Read the whole story

Reno's family-friendly makeover

By Susan Moeller, Boston Globe

On a cold night in March, Great Full Gardens restaurant in a nondescript brick building in Reno's MidTown District is

jamming. Locavores tuck into plates that are paleo-friendly at one table, vegan at the next, grass-fed at another. One of my daughters, Emily, is eating a black bean burger. The other, Sophie, is sipping an artisan kombucha. There's not a slot machine, cigarette, exotic dancer, or daiquiri in sight. Welcome to 21st-century Reno.

Tell someone you're headed to Reno and you're likely to hear a story involving copious amounts of alcohol and activities unfit for a family newspaper. But because Sophie has lived in the area for almost 10 years, I've developed a soft spot for "The Biggest Little City in the World." Often thought of as a smaller, less glitzy – but generally more affordable – cousin to Las Vegas, Reno is in the midst of a big makeover. And it's not just about the food.

In the last few years, Reno's city leaders and entrepreneurs have embraced its easy access to the outdoors, reasonable climate (at 4,000 feet, it's markedly cooler than Vegas and has lots of sunshine); central location (about a four-hour drive from the San Francisco Bay Area); and the culture of Burning Man (about 30,000 "Burners" fly into the Reno-Tahoe International Airport each summer on their way to the arts gathering in Black Rock Desert).

Read the whole story

3-day holiday extravaganza at Valhalla

The 21st annual Valhalla Holiday Faire is Nov. 18-20.

The free event is hosted by Valhalla Tahoe, a nonprofit

cultural arts organization in South Lake Tahoe.

It is Nov. 18 from 5:30-8:30pm, Nov. 19, 10am-5pm and Nov. 20, 10am-4pm at the Valhalla Grand Hall just past Camp Richardson Resort on Highway 89.

The hall will be decorated with three Christmas trees, lights, decorated garlands and wreaths. There will be a fire in the fireplace, holiday music, 28 local vendors and artisans. The South Lake Tahoe Children's Choral Society will perform on Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Santa Claus will be there to greet children of all ages.

Parking is limited. A free shuttle service will be available from the main entrance.

Millennials workplace loyalty has to be bought

By Chris Stokel-Walker, Bloomberg

A strong pat on the back and a reassuring word no longer cuts it when it comes to keeping millennials happy at work.

More than three-quarters of U.K. workers age 18 to 24 say company perks are crucial to their job satisfaction, according to a survey by Perkbox, a company that sells employee gifts. Only about half of baby boomers in the U.K. tied their job satisfaction to the goodies, the survey said.

Amazon gift cards, for example, are the physical representation of a caring, sharing employer, said Saurav Chopra, co-founder of Perkbox.

“Millennials see this as something employers should do as standard, whereas older employees see it as a bonus,” Chopra said.

Read the whole story

Truckee's only hostel a place for new friends, adventures

By Alexandra Spychalsky, Moonshine Ink

Gnomes, by nature, are personable creatures. Triscuits are their snack of choice, and they all speak with a British accent, though they insist they are not in fact British. Regular white lights are too harsh for them, so red is the light frequency they prefer, and which makes them most productive. Hence the name of the Redlight hostel, a nod to the eponymous red lights that fill the basement of the building in the heart of downtown Truckee, where a fleet of friendly gnomes reside.

If this story seems far-fetched to you, don't feel alone. Even the owners of Redlight are still workshopping the story behind the name of their new hostel. What the creative license taken illustrates most is the eccentricity of Redlight's owners, and the kind of stay you'll have if you choose to frequent the hostel.

Chances are, you have driven by the red building, but most likely did not know what it was. That is by design. There is no signage, nothing to advertise the company name or the nature of their business. You can't just walk in, either. You must be buzzed in, meaning you were deemed worthy to enter.

And owners, Zach Cowan and Abby Pulos have no plans to change that.

Read the whole story

Road Beat: 2017 Acura TLX high value continues



Acura TLX is a perfect midsize sedan. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Acura brought us the TL in 1996 and it continued through four generations. It was Acura's midsize offering and at one time nearly outsold the class leader in this segment, the BMW 3 series. It's third generation was the second best-selling

luxury car in the U.S.

In a conversation with the head of Chrysler design, Ralph Gilles, who headed the team that created the second-generation Chrysler 300 in 2004, once told me that he thought the 2004-2008 third generation TL was his favorite design of all cars at the time. That says a lot.

While the fourth generation might have lost its way, the mid-size TL moniker has been replaced in 2015 by the TLX. It fits in the dimension game as a perfect midsize sedan with a length, wheelbase, width and height of 190, 109, 73 and 57 inches respectively. Interior volume is 107 cubic feet including 13 cubes in the nicely shaped trunk.

While not a spittin' image of the third-generation superb looking TL, it fits into the category of great looking cars. I am not a fan of the aluminum plate in the traditional Acura five-sided grill design which in some applications looks like an eagle's beak from the side, but in the TLX it has been toned down significantly. Acura designers did an acceptable rhinoplasty. Overall the new TLX is eye-catching with its clever use of two character lines, its somewhat edgy sleek shape, great looking window line and proportions and strong, muscular back end. I am a new fan. But there is so much more to talk about besides its subjective quality appearance and it's all good, really good.



Specifications

Price \$31,900 to about \$45,000

Engines

2.4L DOHC, 16 valve, VTEC inline four 206 hp @ 6,800 rpm

182 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,500 rpm

3.5L DOHC, 24 valve VTEC V-6 290 hp @ 6,200 rpm

267 lb.-ft. of torque @ 4,500 rpm

Transmissions

Eight-speed DCT (I-4)

Nine-speed torque converter automatic (V-6)

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/FWD/AWD (V-6 only)

Dimensions

Wheelbase 109.3 inches

Length 190.3 inches

Width 73.0 inches

Height 57.0 inches

Track (f/r) 62.8/63.1 inches

Weight 3,492 pounds

Weight Distribution (% f/r) 60/40

Fuel capacity 17.2 gallons

Passenger volume 93.3 cubic feet

Trunk capacity 13.2 cubic feet

Turning circle 39.2 feet

Wheels 17X7.5 inch alloys

Tires 225/55X17 inches (high performance, all season)

Performance

0-60 mph 6.88 seconds

50-70 mph 3.64 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 5.53 seconds

Top speed Way beyond sanity

Fuel economy EPA rated 24/35/28 mpg

city/highway/combined.

Expect 32-33 mpg in rural county driving with some stop and go, 42.5 mpg on the highway at legal speeds.

Acura TLX uses one of two engines, either a 2.4L direct injected VTEC, DOHC 16 valve inline four or a direct injected, VTEC, 3.5L DOHC, 24 valve V-6. My tester had in inline 206 hp at 6,800 rpm and 182 pounds of peak twist at 4,500 rpm. The V-6 cranks out 290 hp at 6,200 and 267 pounds of twist at the same 4,500 rpm. It means that for both these engines peak volumetric efficiency is at 4,500 rpm, the engine speed at which the intake and exhaust are working at their best.

Although all wheel drive is available with the V-6, it is not available with the inline four. However, all models have all wheel steering. More on that later. In my tester, the front wheels are driven through an eight-speed electronic dual clutch tranny. While there is a small torque converter it is mostly locked up as it is only used in taking off from a dead stop for torque multiplication and to help with the VTEC system. The V-6 drives either the front wheels or all wheels via a nine-speed torque converter auto cog swapper.

My tester was a model of decorum with surprising performance from the four-banger knocking off 0-60 mph in just 6.88 seconds. That is as quick as the original second generation V-6. And that stellar performance is backed up by super

responsive passing times accelerating from 50-70 mph on level ground and up a six percent grade in 3.64 and 5.53 seconds respectively. This engine flat out gets it done especially with that terrific eight speed dual clutch tranny. Fly by wire throttle response was almost instantaneous and linear. It was a beautiful thing. I will miss this fuel-sipping rocket ship next week.

As to the IDS (Integrated Dynamics System) system which remaps throttle and tranny aggressiveness, I used the Sport mode as opposed to econ, normal and sport-plus which keep the tranny in lower gears to a much higher rpm. Sport was right for me and I even used the econ mode in leisurely driving and for most people the only mode they will notice a difference is in sport+.

Now here is the kicker, the Acura returns incredible fuel economy especially in light of its very high performance and 3,500 pounds of curb weight. EPA rates the Acura at 24/35/28 mpg city/highway/combined. Here is what the Acura did in the real world. On a level highway two way run with the cruise control set at 70 mph, the TLX returned 42.5 mpg. The engine spins just 1,950 rpm at 70 mph. Overall in 350 miles of varied driving with little time spent of a freeway the TLX returned 33 mpg. In a trip from Placerville to Carson City via Highway 50 and up and down both sides of the Sierras (about 220 miles), the TLX averaged 35.5 mpg. Because of two fuel economy computers I was able track the fuel economy of the TLX from South Lake Tahoe to Placerville. The number was an astounding 47.4 mpg! TLX combines great performance and fuel economy. TLX comes with a large 17.2-gallon fuel tank.

Next on the list is handling and the TLX with its four-wheel electric power steering is fantastic even with its taller 225/55X17 inch rubber mounted on wide 17X7.5 inch alloys. It's accurate and you can subtly feel it helping the rear end when pushed in the corners. Suspension is state of the art MacPherson struts and a multilink system and track is a wide

63 inches. I would prefer 50 or 45 series tires with a lower profile, but maybe Acura is looking for ride quality. But notwithstanding that, this Acura is a true sporting sedan that is simply a blast to do the quick step with in the twisties. You can actually feel the four-wheel steering work guiding the back end. Steering is beautiful and its attitude when driven hard into the corners remains virtually flat. Yes, Acura handles with the best of them even with front wheel drive which only exhibited minor torque steer only a few times at slow speed in a tight corner at high power settings. Turning circle is a bit large at 39.2 feet

Ride quality is simply smooth and quiet. It is firm but it is anything but harsh, a perfect blend for this butt. TLX does not do the bob and weave, instead It is supple and extremely compliant. About perfect. The body was bank vault tight and anechoic chamber quiet. There is no road, wind or engine noise unless you get your foot into it and then the inline four actually makes some sweet music. It loves to rev.

Ventilated front and solid rear discs over a foot in diameter make up the binders and they are powerful. Safety acronyms are complete right down to the LKAS (Lane Keep Assist System). If you want a safer motor vehicle, buy an M1A1 Abrams Tank. But it might not fit in your garage, it burns about a gallon of Jet-A for every half mile with a top speed of 45 mph but it sure can pack a wallop. Safe driving starts with an attentive driver. The LED headlights could be used for night tennis matches in a pinch.

Now for more Acura goodness, the interior. My TLX with the standard Tech Package had no options and none are offered nor needed. Inside are sublime perforated leather seating which after four hours in the saddle felt great (both the seat and my butt). Rear seating is spacious, even for three. The balance of the interior is soft touch material on the doors, instrument panel and console. There is nothing even remotely cheap about the Acura, no corners have been clipped and it

leaves its occupants with a real feel of quality and luxury without being ostentatious.

Instrumentation is complete with a big tach and speedo left and right flanking the trip computer/info center with the great feature of two independent trip computers. That is well thought out.

Now here is what makes this mid-size sports sedan so inviting, the price. The TLX starts at \$31,900 nicely equipped, plus \$940 for the train and truck from Marysville, Ohio. My TLX with the Tech Package ups the ante to \$35,950 which includes everything, NAV, leather, power everywhere including both front chairs and lane keep assist. There are no other options offered. The V-6 will add about \$3,450. But here is the deal. Many of your mid-size cars like Camry, Nissan, and so on can reach a sticker of \$35,000 plus. The Acura is a better deal at that point and therein lies the incredible value of Acura. I would buy one and I would go with the inline four. It has great performance without a shred of guilt. I would only buy the V-6 if I needed AWD which stickers for \$41,600 with the Tech Package, otherwise this TLX with the Tech Pack is the way to go, literally and figuratively. I will miss this TLX, it's like a perfect car, great performance, outstanding fuel economy, superb handling and ride, beautifully equipped and a sublime interior for a few bucks less than \$36 large. Such a deal.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Rare Gold Rush era books to be auctioned



One-of-a-kind book
collection for sale.
Photo/Swann Auction
Galleries

By Katie Dowd, San Francisco Chronicle

Collectors and admirers of early California history will be thrilled to see a lot of rare books – most from before the turn of the century – up for auction.

The books cover topics from Gold Rush life to scenic shots of Yosemite before all those tour buses descended.

Twenty-five of the lots up for auction by Swann Auction Galleries are from the estate of California adventurer Timothy Treacy.

Read the whole story

Ski film loaded with Tahoe talent, locations



Olympian Jonny Moseley of Squaw Valley narrates and is featured athlete in the Warren Miller film "Here, There and Everywhere." Photo/Hank de Vre/Warren Miller Entertainment

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Anyone who watches Warren Miller films knows what they're going to get with each new edition.

There will be incredible scenery, amazing athletes and superb production values.

But what most viewers might not know is how much of it is thanks to people and places around Lake Tahoe.

The 67th installment, "Here, There and Everywhere," is no different.

Read the whole story

MontBleu to be transformed into Christmas wonderland



No Place Like Home by Cyndy Brown-Carlton was the 2015 winner of the best themed tree. Photo Copyright 2016 Carolyn E. Wright

Barton Health's eighth annual Festival of Trees & Lights is Dec. 1-4 at MontBleu in Stateline.

All proceeds from the festival will support the expansion of Barton Health's Cancer Wellness Program. The expanded program will address the social, emotional, and functional aspects of

a patient's cancer journey through supportive services such as massage, exercise, psychotherapy, and nutrition classes. This program is offered free for community members undergoing cancer treatment.

Children and adults of all ages can support the cause and attend the festival. Barton Foundation volunteers and staff transform MontBleu's convention center into a holiday paradise with trees and wreaths decorated by local artists and schoolchildren. Attendees may enjoy the Teddy Bear Hospital, a kids' craft area, a Santa photo session, raffle, and live entertainment.

In addition, special events are featured throughout the festival. Seniors, ages 55 and over, may attend the Senior Stroll at no cost on Thursday from 2-4pm. The Teddy Bear Brunch is Dec. 4 from 10am-noon. Special events sell out.

For more information or to purchase tickets, go **online**. or call 530.543.5909.

South Lake Tahoe honors pioneer Springmeyer



Marjorie Springmeyer is remembered by the city of South Lake Tahoe.
Photo/LTN

A memorial for South Lake Tahoe pioneer **Marjorie Springmeyer** has been erected at Bijou Community Park.

Springmeyer died earlier this year at the age of 93.

Her family used to own much of the property in the center of town. Springmeyers' brothers and heirs still have substantial land holdings on the South Shore.

The plaque on the granite rock at the park acknowledges the family's contributions as early settlers.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report