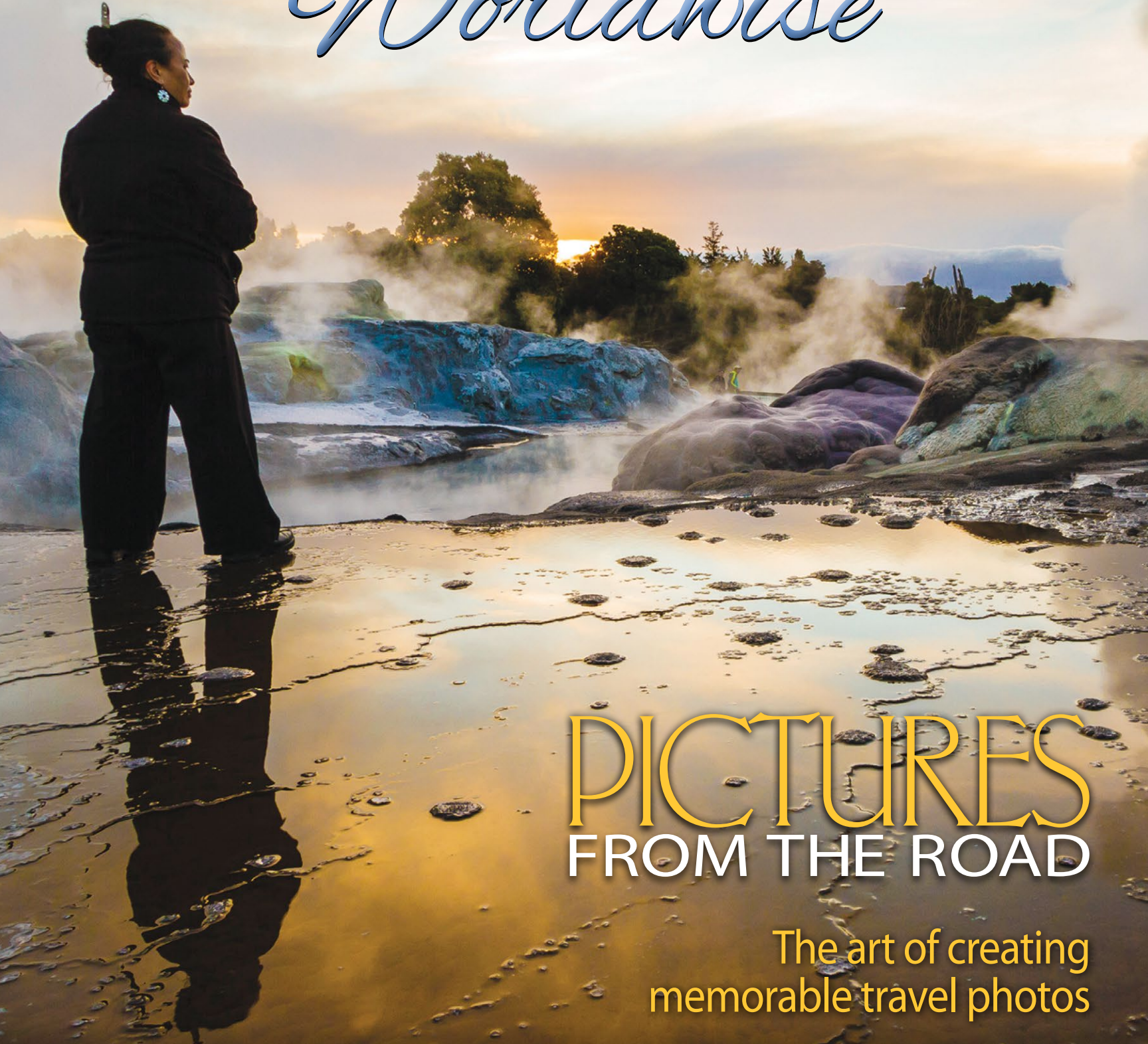


AAA TRAVELER

Winter 2016

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TWO OF A KIND: SUPER BOWL HOSTS

• SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

In the spotlight this year with the Super Bowl, the City by the Bay beckons with iconic sites and the latest of many culinary accolades.



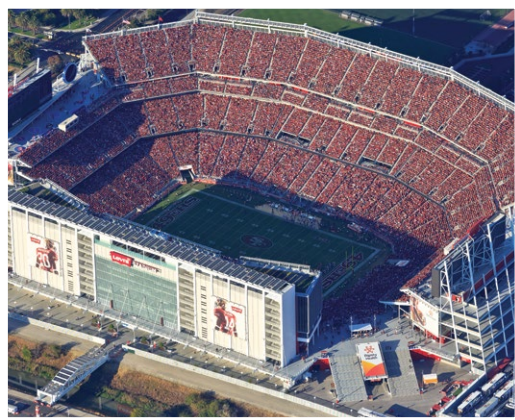
COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL

The Golden Gate Bridge at dusk



COURTESY OF RITZ-CARLTON

Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco lobby



COURTESY OF LEVISTADIUM.COM

Levi's Stadium



COURTESY OF SAN FRANCISCO TRAVEL

A cable car in San Francisco

STAY

For the ultimate in luxury, service and convenience, stay at the recently renovated **AAA Five Diamond Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco**, a neoclassical beauty on the outside with sleek, modern interiors. Also centrally located in Nob Hill is the **Fairmont San Francisco** with its exquisite marble lobby, newly renovated guest rooms and panoramic view of the city and the bay. The **Westin St. Francis**, rebuilt after the Great Earthquake of 1906, stands as the grand dame of Union Square. In the Fisherman's Wharf area, try the boutique **Argonaut Hotel**, located in a historic warehouse. Awarded Four Diamonds by AAA, the Argonaut charms with exposed brick walls and maritime-themed décor.

EAT

In 2015, when *Bon Appetit* magazine named San Francisco **The Best Food City in the Country Right Now**, it also put **AL's Place** in the Mission District atop the list of America's Best New Restaurants. So veggie-obsessed is chef Aaron London that he lists meats as "sides" on the menu. If the bay view and the scent of saltwater have you craving seafood, consider **Farallon**, where Jellyfish Lounge has a raw bar and oyster bar. For lunch with atmosphere, stop at **Ferry Building Marketplace** with its assortment of eateries and specialty food shops. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, Ferry Plaza behind the marketplace hosts **the city's largest farmers market**. Of course, when you're in San Francisco you have to pick up some sourdough bread. Go right to the source: **Boudin Bakery**, inventors of the tangy French bread.

SEE

Catch the sea lions frolicking near **Pier 39 at Fisherman's Wharf** and savor that fantastic view of the Golden Gate and Bay bridges, Alcatraz and the city skyline while you shop unique boutiques and galleries. During the day, the **sidewalks of the 1.7-mile Golden Gate Bridge are open** to pedestrians and cyclists. **Golden Gate Park** is the playground for San Franciscans and visitors alike. Located within the park are the **San Francisco Botanical Garden**, the **de Young Museum**, which exhibits American art from the 17th to the 21st centuries, and the **California Academy of Sciences**, which packs in an aquarium, planetarium and natural history museum under its green roof. Coming May 14, the **San Francisco Museum of Modern Art**, located in the Yerba Buena neighborhood, reopens at nearly three times its original size.

DO

Take a tour of Super Bowl host Levi's Stadium; in addition to the standard stadium tour, there are tours geared toward families, technology-lovers (it's the most technologically advanced sports venue in North America) and art-lovers. (Tours restart a few weeks after the big game.) **Ride a cable car**; it's the iconic San Francisco way to travel. Rides cost \$7 each, but you can buy a one-, three- or seven-day pass for unlimited rides on the cable cars and the entire Muni public transit system. In the evening, take in a show. San Francisco boasts a first-rate **symphony** as well as **opera** and **ballet companies**.



Houston's skyline

HOUSTON, Texas

Houston will receive increased attention as a travel destination next year, when the pros face off there in Super Bowl LI. Get a head start and go now.

STAY

If it was good enough for a President ... stay at the **Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa** on a secluded 18-acre site minutes from downtown. The Houstonian, "Houston's White House," was the official voting residence of George H.W. Bush and his wife, Barbara, while the senior Bush served as U.S. Vice President and President. Theater-lovers might prefer to stay at the family-owned and -operated **Lancaster Hotel** in the theater district. Be sure to take a peek at the history displays in the lobby, which chronicle visits from the likes of Clark Gable and Gene Autry. The **Hotel Icon**, located in a 12-story building that was one of the country's first skyscrapers, is an architectural gem that puts you in the heart of the vibrant downtown historic district nightlife.

EAT

To get your beef fix, dine at famed **Pappas Bros. Steakhouse**—either the original location on the west side or the newly opened restaurant downtown. You'll be able to choose from an award-winning wine list to complement your ribeye. If you're in Texas, you have to try Tex-Mex. Among the best you'll find is at the **Original Ninfa's on Navigation**. You'll find a number of noteworthy spots in the Montrose neighborhood, a hotbed of culinary activity. They include Chinese restaurant **Mala Sichuan Bistro** and Japanese restaurant **Uchi**, the signature locale of James Beard Award-winning chef Tyson Cole. For exceptional Indian fare, head to the nearby Upper Kirby District and **Pondicheri**, which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and has an onsite bakery.

SEE

You can occupy yourself happily for days in the **Houston Museum District**, which boasts a whopping 19 cultural institutions within walking distance. If you have kids in tow, tops on the list should be the 90,000-square-foot **Children's Museum of Houston**, rated #1 in the country by *Parents* magazine. Families also will enjoy the interactive **Health Museum** with its walk-through tour of the human body and the **Houston Museum of Science**. Art lovers can visit not only the **Museum of Fine Arts**, but also museums of contemporary arts, photography and contemporary craft. Instead of the traditional self-guided visit to **Space Center Houston**, sign up online in advance (as much as a month or more) for the **Level 9 Tour**, a four-to five-hour guided small group tour that takes you behind the scenes to places most visitors never get to see, like ISS Mission Control and astronaut training facilities.

DO

During the day, be sure to **explore the newly renovated Buffalo Bayou Park**, a 160-acre, 2.3-mile-long green oasis in the city where you can walk, rent bicycles or kayak on Buffalo Bayou. Football fans will want to **tour NRG Stadium**, the first stadium in the NFL to have a retractable roof and a removable natural grass field. In the evenings, see a show, or two, or three. Houston is one of few cities in the country with its own **symphony** as well as resident companies in **ballet, opera, dramatic theater** (Alley Theatre) and **musical theater** (Theatre Under the Stars).



Space Center Houston



The Original Ninfa's on Navigation



Lancaster Hotel lobby