

WHAT A TRIP



FAMILY PHOTO

Ginger Harden in Cornwall with actor Martin Clunes, who plays the titular role in the British TV series "Doc Martin." She and Angela Hughes ventured to England to see the show's filming.

Telly visions and starry eyes

Our readers share tales of their rambles around the world.

Who: Friends Angela Hughes (the author) and Ginger Harden of Arlington.

Where, when, why: In June, we ventured to England and Wales for two weeks to visit the scenic sites of two television series: Port Isaac, Cornwall (the fictional Fortwenn of "Doc Martin"), and Porthmeiton, Wales, the setting for the 1960s cult classic "The Prisoner."

"Doc Martin" is a favorite of both of ours, and Port Isaac plays a major role in the series about a London surgeon who takes over a Cornish village practice after developing a phobia about the sight of blood. The combination of eccentric villagers and Doc Martin's curmudgeonly personality result in awkward moments. We timed the trip so it would fall during the filming of its reportedly final season.

As a fan of "The Prisoner," I had longed for years to visit Porthmeiton. In that show, a spy who resigns is kidnapped and taken to the Village, where he is referred to only as No. 6. A succession of No. 2s try to get information from him as he plots to escape and discover the identity of No. 1.

The trip also gave us the

office and Doc Martin was not? Why was Doc Martin stomping angrily (well, he stomps everywhere angrily) into the chemist shop and out again carrying a box? Even our hotel had been part of the show — the Bay Hotel was Wenn House in Episode 5 of Season 4.

We were also stunned by the beautiful scenery of Cornwall and North Wales. Port Isaac offers an unending variety of gorgeous views of the sea crashing against the rocky coasts. Seeing photographs of Porthmeiton could not prepare us for the magical beauty of this Italian-influenced three-dimensional work of art. Rising on hills alongside an estuary, Porthmeiton is the whimsical creation of architect Clough Williams-Ellis. Every view of the multi-color village is photo-worthy. We stayed in the Unicorn Suite, one of several suites scattered around the village. We could not resist waving from our balcony as day visitors on walking tours paused to look up at our bright pink house and made us part of their photo collection.

We got an added bonus for our TV location-themed trip when Facebook friends took us to the village of Clevedon, where "Broadchurch" is filmed. We (and four dogs) strolled around the

Biggest laugh or cry: After hours of filming, Martin Clunes, Doc Martin himself, walked over to tables of fans, including Ginger. He spent quite a while chatting with everyone. Having watched him pose with photographs with lots of fans, Ginger simply said hello and told him she wouldn't bother him for a photo, since he had been gracious enough to be photographed with her in 2013 and, frankly, she didn't think they could top that photo. He said, "Let's give it a try" and channeled his inner Harpo Marx as he placed one knee in Ginger's hand. A series of photographs captured Clunes almost losing his balance, and he and Ginger sharing a glorious laugh.

How unexpected: For the unexpected in a good way: Porthmeiton was completely unknown to Ginger before the trip, and she was taken in by its beauty from first sight. And even though I had seen it in "The Prisoner," I also was surprised at how stunning Porthmeiton is, particularly after 5 p.m., when it is closed to day visitors and belongs only to those staying there. Porthmeiton then took on a particularly otherworldly feel.

For the unexpected in a less-good way: We used public transportation to get everywhere, — neither of us felt up to driving on the left side of the road. The

This week's best travel bargains around the globe.

Land

• The Marker Waterfront Resort Key West, a new high-end hotel in the Key West Historic Seaport and Marina, is offering 20 percent savings on two deals. Both specials start at \$219 a night, plus about 13 percent tax and \$25 daily resort fee, normal rate is from \$269. With the Last Minute Bookings deal, reserve a room within a two-week window; for the Mark the Occasion deal, book at least 30 days in advance. Price includes welcome drink, WiFi, access to three pools, workout room and business center. Info: 844-229-8312, www.themarkwaterfront.com.

• Save 25 percent on a family golf package at the Italian medieval village-turned-resort of Toscana Resort Castelfalfi. The deal starts at \$1,174 for a family of three (child must be 11 or younger) and includes three nights at La Tabaccaia, Castelfalfi's boutique hotel; three days of golf, including unlimited rounds for adults and three one-hour junior lessons; daily breakfast; and most taxes. Travel in October or November for the lowest price. The resort is a 40-minute drive from Pisa. Info: www.castelfalfi.co.uk.

• Valamar Lacomra Dubrovnik Hotel on Croatia's Babin Kuk peninsula is offering a five-night package at about \$743 per couple for stays Sept. 1-Oct. 31. The Discover Dubrovnik deal includes lodging with breakfasts;

airport transfers; access to the Ragusa Spa; walking tour of Old Town; one-day Dubrovnik Card, which covers a 24-hour bus pass and entrance fees to museums and galleries; and taxes. Priced separately, the package costs about \$1,070. Book by Sept. 15 at www.evlamar.com/en/. tkroner.dubrovnik-lacomra.com.

Sea

• Vacations by Rail is offering free airfare on 15 cruise-rail packages in Europe. Prices vary. For example, the eight-day Danube Discovery Christmas Markets cruise, which sails from Nuremberg, Germany, to Budapest on Nov. 30, costs \$6,890 for a couple in a standard suite. Price includes personal butler service, 20 meals and beverages all day, WiFi, use of electronic bicycles, return airport transfers, gratuities; and taxes. The free airfare, booked through Vacations by Rail, is worth up to \$3,720 per couple and is available from Washington airports. Book by Aug. 31. Info: 877-920-2244, www.vacationsbyrail.com.

• Book an interior stateroom on select 2016 and 2017 Azamara Club Cruises and receive a two-category upgrade to a Club Veranda cabin. For example, the seven-night Pearl of the Adriatic cruise departing Venice on July 3, 2016, now starts at \$3,019 per person double for a veranda stateroom — a savings of \$1,130. Add \$122 port charges. Book by Aug. 31 and request promo code FREEUP. Info: 877-936-6888, www.azamaraclubcruises.com.

WHAT'S THE DEAL?

Air

• Southwest is offering sale fares on nonstop flights from BWI Marshall to destinations in the Caribbean, Mexico and Costa Rica. For example, round-trip fare to San Jose, Costa Rica, starts at \$345, including taxes; connecting flights on other airlines start at \$420. Travel Aug. 25-Dec. 16. Blackout dates apply. Book by Aug. 6 at www.southwest.com.

Package

• World Spree is offering its Best of Thailand tour starting at \$1,799 per person double. The 12-night trip includes round-trip airfare from Washington to Bangkok, five nights at the Royal Orchid Sheraton Bangkok; three nights at the Siripanna Villa Resort & Spa in Chiang Mai; two nights at the Kailiya Mountain Resort & Spa in Chiang Rai; two nights at the Sukhothai Heritage Resort in Sukhothai; 20 meals; guided tours with entrance fees; land transport; airport transfers; and taxes. Priced separately, air, hotels and tours alone cost about \$2,150. The lowest price applies to select 2016 September and October departures and includes a \$200 per-person discount for payment by cash or check. Info: 855-566-6868, www.worldspree.com.

— Carol Sottili, Andrea Sachs

Submit travel deals to whatsdeals@washpost.com. Prices were verified at press time Thursday, but deals sell out and availability is not guaranteed. Some restrictions may apply.

It's time for the Uberization of airlines



The Navigator
CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

only four large airlines controlling more than 80 percent of domestic air travel, the industry is a classic oligopoly. Even the government, which is currently investigating airlines for collusion, seems to agree.

Air travelers, who complain of higher prices and fewer choices, say they're ready for the next Uber to take flight. And now Congress is in a good position to

the fares were reasonable or offered conveniences not offered by other airlines, and if they were equally accessible, I'd definitely check it out," he says. "Especially if I could avoid the hassles of a major airport."

It's easier said than done. Several travel start-ups have tried to follow the Uber model.

Although they're an option for business travelers, they're still priced out of reach of most leisure travelers. For example, Rise, a private flight-sharing service in Dallas that launched this May, offers an "all-you-can-fly" option starting at \$1,650 a month. It offers scheduled flights on King Air 350 eight-passenger twin-engine aircraft between Dallas, Houston, Austin and Midland, depending on demand, and has announced plans to expand

"There has to be compromise on both sides," he says.

"Especially for concepts that involve smaller, recreational aircraft and pilots." The smaller operators, he says, would need to step up and meet some safety requirements. But the government can also more clearly articulate what will and won't be allowed, especially when it comes to charter operators being allowed to sell on a per-seat or per-aircraft basis.

A clearer statement "will have the biggest impact on our business and will determine truly whether the airline industry can be disrupted," he adds.

All of which brings us to the FAA bill, which is now being drafted by the Republican-controlled Congress — Republicans who, time and again,