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in *ITN's* Mart classifieds section and found **Dancing Bear Tours** (*Prospekt Kosmonavtov 15A-6H, St. Petersburg, Russia; phone +7 812 379 2633 or mobile +7 921 324 4640 or, in the US, 323/703-1542, <http://dancing-bear-tours.com>*).

I contacted owner Julie on Feb. 15, and she emailed and also called me and was most helpful in planning our three days.

We saw everything we requested and much more at a very fair price. Her initial fee was \$455 per person for the three days, but we added attractions, so our final cost was \$500 each. We were so satisfied with her service, each couple added a tip of \$200.

Mindful of the fact that we are older, Julie managed to find restrooms and places to sit in a timely manner. She and her colleague Vladimir met us at our ship each morning. While she was a wonderful guide, we were equally impressed with Vladimir's driving skills in the city, where traffic is sometimes a little daunting. He always managed to let us off near whatever attraction we were seeing and was waiting when we emerged.

We recommend Dancing Bear Tours, Julie and Vladimir to anyone who will be visiting St. Petersburg.

JOANNE RAMOS
West Sacramento, CA

Mixed review for hotel in Phnom Penh

While visiting our son in Phnom Penh, my husband, Bill, and I stayed near the airport at the **Cambodian Country Club & Hotel** (*Street 2004, Group 6 Toeuk Thla, Russey Keao district, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; phone 023 885 591 or 592, www.cambodian-country-club.com — club membership is not necessary to stay here*), which I found on the Internet.

The price per night was about \$56 for a double or \$50, single. We were there nearly three weeks, Nov. 4-23, 2012.

Let the company respond first

Before writing to ITN about a problem you've had with a travel firm or establishment, we suggest that you write to them first to be sure they are aware of the problem and are given the opportunity to address it.

When then writing to ITN, include copies of any correspondence regarding the matter. ITN prints letters from subscribers only but cannot print every letter or pursue a company response regarding every complaint. Letters may be edited for publication.

The hotel building had about 25 big rooms, all with balconies but no views; they overlooked vacant lots, trash heaps and urban farms. But the rooms were nice and kept very clean.

The restaurant consistently served the worst food I've ever encountered on a regular basis. It was overcooked and dried out, like they had cooked it the previous week and kept it warm 'til it was ordered.

There was a huge, clean, beautiful pool, a horseback ring for lessons, tennis courts, volleyball courts, handball courts and badminton courts. A special kids' section was under construction.

The pool really called to me and was my daily sanity in this filthy, traffic-choked and generally unpleasant city. The grounds were nicely landscaped, with many plants, and the staff was very helpful and nice.

FLORENCE DRAKE
Readfield, ME

Apartment, guide in Rome

Four of us (two couples) spent a week in Rome, Dec. 26 2012-Jan. 3, 2013. As we have done for the past 20 years of traveling together during this holiday week, we rented a furnished apartment with two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room and a kitchen. We always choose a central location.

We booked our apartment in Rome in March '12, and we struck

“gold.” The **apartment** (at 45 Via del SS Quattro) was located within a block of the Colosseum, which is impressive to look at from any angle, day and night. And all places of interest, except the Vatican, were within walking distance (bearing in mind that Rome was built on seven hills). Since the weather cooperated all week, these walks across Rome became the highlight of our short visit.

Our rental agent was **Roman Reference** (Via dei Capocci 94 - 00184 Rome, Italy; phone +39 064 890 3612, fax 064 898 6666, www.romanreference.com), which connected us with the apartment's owners. For the week, we paid €1,827 (near \$2,380). Before the owner let us settle into the apartment, he personally made sure that it was immaculate and stocked with extra sheets and towels.

The large, modern and fully furnished apartment could actually accommodate six people, since it also had a den with bunk beds.

The appliances and equipment in the kitchen were sufficient to cook a full-course meal. We were not inclined to do so because the area had a large number of wonderful restaurants and cafés.

To top things off, about a month before we arrived we hired **Francesca Caruso** (phone 339 261 6482 or email francescainroma@gmail.com) for half a day to take us inside some of the places that we wanted to see without having to stand in long queues.

Francesca is a licensed guide. Her English is perfect and so is her knowledge of local history, architecture and art. We paid her \$50 an hour for our 5-hour walking tour across the ancient city of Rome, which took in outdoor markets, museums, galleries, monuments and the Pantheon. We paid our own admission fees and treated her to lunch. She actually declined to accept a tip!

FRED KRANZ
Potomac, MD

A stay in Paris My husband, Herb, and I rented a fantastic apartment in Paris, **Le Buci** (rue Buci, 6th Arrondissement, Saint-Germain-des-Prés), May 29-June 7, 2012, from AdrianLeeds.com. It's on the Left Bank, and at €235 (near \$306) a night it was well worth the price.

When you think of a typical Paris street, this was it — cafés, small restaurants, bakeries, a supermarket and St. Germain on one side, with the Seine and Notre Dame on the other.

Since I had been to Paris before, I just enjoyed the wonderful weather (probably the only week that it didn't rain). I loved going to the flea market and also spent an enjoyable afternoon on a canal boat ride from the Arsenal marina.

We enjoyed two dinners at **J'Go** (rue Clément, 75006 Paris; phone 01 42 26 19 02, www.lejgo.com), one block off St. Germain. It is a rotisserie and charcuterie with a large outdoor patio that draws an



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