

SundayTravel

WITH NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS
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Making glass at the Corning Museum of Glass in upstate New York.

TRENDSPOTTING

MAKING MEMORIES

Forget just sitting on the beach. More travelers want to enhance their vacations with immersive, hands-on activities. And destinations are responding to the growing demand.

BY JON MARCUS | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

NASHVILLE

The Waxomatic Records Voice-O-Graph looks like something in a museum: a throwback to pre-digital times when aspiring musicians and lonely lovers would record themselves on vinyl in pursuit of different but equally passionate desires.

But this one, assembled in

1947, still works — the kind, according to Jess Rice, a plant from Medway who's among hipsters tending it. It's a center of the converted auto-body shop behind the Nashville Mission

proofed booth, with its chrome art-deco finishings, that anchors the label's hip gift shop. Neil Young, Loretta Lynn, Jay Z, Pearl Jam, and Willie Nelson have, too.

Across town, at Nashville's famous Goo Goo Clusters — purportedly the world's first combina-

up a seat at the Candle Bar at Paddywax and pour their own keepsake candles. A short walk from there, they can create their own letterpress posters at Hatch Show Print, which has turned out some of the most iconic country music posters.

It's not just in Nashville that this is happening. Destinations worldwide, and tour operators that serve them, are responding to a growing demand from travelers who want to not just see, but do.

"What we've learned and what we hear every day from our guests is that that immersive experience

Making memories you can carry home

Travelers can also make pottery and Celtic jewelry on Tauck's "Ireland Forever" package and jewelry or art from sea glass or their own Mi'kmaq moosehide drum on Prince Edward Island or Mi'kmaqnest baskets in New Brunswick.

not only tourists who are recording

WISCONSIN

Used from Page M1

After donning aprons and starting from a winemaker to filter out the yeast and then the finished product. People who prefer something stiffer can head to Buffalo, a bourbon distillery in Lexington, Ky., where they get a tour, and hands-on training in how to tuck their barrel of bourbon, which is hand-bottled for them. A pricey souvenir — barrels start at \$5,500 — but the experience has grown so popular amid an ongoing whiskey craze, it has to be scheduled as much as a year in advance.

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At M.L. Leddy's in Fort Worth, Texas, they can be fitted for custom-made cowboy hats, boots, or belts. Hawaii's Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club offers lei-making lessons; the Grand Hyatt Baha Mar in the Bahamas, classes in painting, ceramics, culture, and arts and crafts that guests can carry home.

Companies including Perillo's Learning Journeys are all about experiences like these. One Perillo trip to Japan includes Saori-weaving demonstrations, which end with travelers crafting their own small scarves or shawls. On the "Italian Art and Architecture" tour, customers learn to make mosaic tiles using as their models



GARY HODGES PHOTOGRAPHY

Children enjoy the glass-making activities at the Corning Museum of Glass. They get to keep their creations.

"As people travel a lot, just sitting on the beach and having the allure of what you see," he said. "We find that travelers want to do more."

Bringing home something they made themselves "works both ways. The person's satisfaction that they actually learned something about the culture. And when they go home and it gets and they look at that in their day, that's free advertisement. It connects long as you have that house."



said. "It's heartfelt. People when they're in a destination often think, 'What can I give,' and they'll settle for that shot glass because there's nothing else." Something handmade "really deepens the conversation, not only for the recipient but for the giver. It's an intimate connection with where you went."

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One that's being made available in destinations of all kinds.

Alaia, a new resort in Ambergris Caye, Belize, for instance, will include a working art gallery just off the four-story atrium when it opens around Christmas 2020, developer Andrew Ashcroft said. Local weavers, woodworkers, and pottery-makers will be there every day, making custom handicrafts for guests to take home or showing them how to create such things themselves.

"Belize in general is very culturally rich place, and when you come here and you just sit on the beach you miss that whole element," said Ashcroft.

products from a local food and farmer's market; on trips to India, they can sit with local women and quilt.

"Guests think it's great to have these things to keep as a remembrance, but also we find travelers want to connect more closely with the cultures," said Carol Dimopoulos, the company's founder and president. "They want to live like a local."

Many travelers also like the idea of making something personal to give as a gift when they return from a trip, Dimopoulos

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