



In this Sunday, Sept 7, 2014 photo, 1 World Trade Center towers above the lower Manhattan skyline in New York. — AP photos

Tourists relax at the Hotel Nacional, overlooking Morro Castle in Havana, Cuba.

Destinations for 2015: Milan, Cuba, Queens and more

See Cuba before it changes. Check out the World Expo in Milan. And if you're heading to New York City to see the view from 1 World Trade Center's observatory (scheduled to open late spring), take the subway to Queens and see if you can figure out why it topped Lonely Planet's "best in the US" destinations for 2015. Several major anniversaries will be marked by a variety of events, including 70 years since the end of World War II, the 60th anniversary of the opening of Disneyland and 10 years since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

Europe

The Milan Expo opens in May for six months and is expected to draw 20 million visitors. The Expo is the modern incarnation of the old World's Fairs that thrilled 19th- and 20th-century guests with new products and technology. The theme of the Milan Expo is food and nutrition, and dozens of countries will be participating. The US will be doing its part by sending six authentic food trucks to Italy featuring regional American and ethnic fusion menus. Milan's famous opera house, La Scala, normally closed in the summer, will host performances daily during the Expo.

Elsewhere in Europe: Jan 1 marks the day Lithuania officially adopts the euro as its currency. Pilsen, in the Czech Republic - home to pilsner-style drink and a Gothic cathedral - and Mons, Belgium, known for history ranging from World War I back to

the ancient Romans, have been named 2015 European Capitals of Culture. And Norway made a number of "where to go in 2015" lists, thanks to its connection to Disney's blockbuster "Frozen" film.

Anniversaries

Singapore celebrates its golden Jubilee - 50 years since independence from Great Britain. Vietnam celebrates 70 years since independence from France and 50 years since the first US combat troops arrived at Da Nang, which some historians say marked the start of the Vietnam War - even though Americans had been sent to the country in prior years.

A number of US museums and historic sites will be hosting exhibits and events to mark 150 years since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the end of the Civil War. The new year also marks 70 years since the end of World War II, both the defeat of Nazi Germany and the atomic bombing of Japan that ended the war in Asia. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are planning memorial services on the August anniversaries of the bombings, along with numerous arts projects and peace-themed events throughout the year.

In New Orleans, Aug 29 is 10 years since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. "Come see the new New Orleans" is a mantra in the tourist industry there for showcasing trendy emerging neighborhoods and a vibrant restaurant scene. South Dakota expects crowds for the 50th Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup

in September and the 75th Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in August.

Cuba

The news that the US intends to normalize relations with Cuba could lead to a rush of travelers hoping to experience the island before it loses its frozen-in-time culture to an onslaught of US chain stores, hotels and tourists. But don't pack your bags just yet: For the near future, the only way you can legally visit Cuba as an American citizen is to take a "people to people" cultural exchange tour licensed by the US government. The tours are expensive and itineraries are limited.

New York City

Two big openings take place in the Big Apple in 2015: the observatory at 1 World Trade in late spring and the new Whitney Museum of American Art in May in Manhattan's Meatpacking District near the High Line and the Hudson River. The city also got a Christmas gift from Lonely Planet, which named the borough of Queens as "best in the US" destination. Manhattan has been giving ground to trendy Brooklyn in recent years, but the elevation of Queens as the next big thing was a bit of a surprise. Not that New Yorkers and tourists alike don't love Queens attractions like the 1964 World's Fair grounds, the hipster beach scene in the

Rockaways, Chinatown in Flushing, the Asian and Latin American ethnic mix in Jackson Heights and the emerging

industrial-chic ambience of Long Island City. But the borough is not quite on tourist radars yet - though the Lonely Planet pronouncement may change that.

Theme parks

Universal Studios Hollywood debuts two new attractions in 2015: Springfield, an immersive area opening in spring surrounding The Simpsons Ride, and Fast & Furious Supercharged, a thrill ride opening in summer based on the film series.

Disneyland opens "Frozen Fun" in January in Anaheim, California, with a sing-along, "Olaf's Snow Fest," and meet-and-greets with Anna and Elsa, among other attractions. The California theme park also celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, with celebration details to be revealed at the end of January. Disney World near Orlando, Florida, has several 2015 openings, including a new Italian restaurant, Trattoria al Forno; an Africa Marketplace at Disney's Animal Kingdom; and at the new Disney Springs complex, three restaurants, STK, Morimoto Asia and The Boathouse. — AP



In this file photo, Phill Randall of Custer, S.D., carries the American flag during the Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup near Custer, S.D.



A plate of duck confit with rice and citrus gastrique is displayed at Herbsaint Restaurant in New Orleans.



In this file photo, food is displayed on a table during the groundbreaking ceremony of the US Pavilion Expo 2015, in Pero, Italy.

Living in and decorating a 100-year-old Craftsman

By Solvej Schou

My love of 100-year-old California Craftsman bungalows - those low-slung, early 20th century Arts and Crafts-era homes known for their clean, horizontal lines and sturdy woodwork - runs long and deep. I grew up in one in Hollywood, outfitted with dark, wooden, built-in cabinets and exposed beams, and my family lives in one in South Pasadena, northeast of downtown Los Angeles, with a swooping Japanese-style roof. My fiancé, Dave, and I rent a small, century-old Craftsman house here in Pasadena's landmark district Bungalow Heaven, home to more than 1,000 historic bungalows, most of them Craftsman.

Why do I appreciate them? One word: uniqueness. Each traditional Craftsman house is different, with its own personality (in our rental, the toilet is in a separate room from the bathroom sink and bathtub) and an emphasis on natural materials and colors, from slate gray to clay brown. Architectural twists such as sleeping porches, wide-open entrances, and pillars made out of stone were built as a minimalist reaction against industrial design and as an ode to warmer weather and (then) fresher air. Decorating a Craftsman is also a labor of love.

"The whole Craftsman movement was about rediscovering handmade things," says Sue Mossman, executive director of the preservation non-profit Pasadena Heritage. "There's a natural 'form follows function' approach. Everything has a purpose to it as well as a beauty."

Traditional Craftsman

Gustav Stickley, who started making Arts and Crafts-style furniture and accessories in the late 19th century, has long represented the pinnacle of Craftsman design. Antique Stickley hand-finished, solid-wood armchairs, tables and couches, defined by a sleek vertical-lined "mission" style, can run upwards of \$5,500 today. Mossman, who lives in a traditional Craftsman and says she owns a couple of "fine Stickley pieces," views the furniture, like Craftsman themselves, as having lasting appeal.

"In the 1980s and '90s, the value of these antique pieces went through the roof," she says. "It has dropped off since then, but the value of original pieces is still very high." Since Dave and I, like many, can't afford the prized brand, we searched for much less pricey, though not necessarily handmade, furniture and decorations for our place. There are strong connections between the Craftsman and midcentury modern movements when it comes to simple functionalism, says Mossman. My Craftsman rental is a mixture of both.

We found a modestly priced, tan 1963 Lane Acclaim walnut wood coffee table with dovetail edges at an antique store to fit in with the earthy Craftsman color scheme in our living room. Our

faux-Craftsman, geometric mica glass, wood and metal living room table lamp we snagged on sale for \$150 at retailer Lamps Plus to perch on top of a Wildon Home mission-style, espresso-hued end table for not much more.

Glass vases

Bought at a nearby sofa store, our couch is made out of chocolate-brown wood and tweed, a midcentury modern reproduction called "The Draper." Our vintage living room rug is a '60s striped blend of warm orange, green, pink and white. We also picked up glass vases, Arts and Crafts-style wooden frames and dinnerware from flea markets and online through Etsy and eBay. Call it Craftsman flair with a dash of "Mad Men" thrown in. "Even if it's a reproduction, people who appreciate the character of their house will be able to pick things that suit that same personality," notes Mossman.

Inspiration especially came in the form of a trip to the custom-furnished, three-story Gamble House, Pasadena's premier example of California Craftsman architecture. It was designed by the architectural firm Greene & Greene in 1908 as a roomy winter home for David and Mary Gamble, of Procter & Gamble. Inside, we stood surrounded by curved stairway banisters, smooth surfaces, and wooden pegs all made out of soft mahogany, teak, oak, maple and cedar.

"Craftsman style has a casual but clean simplicity to it that can be dressed up or dressed down," notes Alvin Huang, an architect and University of Southern California School of Architecture assistant professor.

Afterward, in the gift shop, Dave and I bought a clay tile, similar to those in the Gamble House, decorated with a light yellow and white frog. It sits on our end table, next to the lamp, with more Craftsman-worthy knickknacks to come. — AP

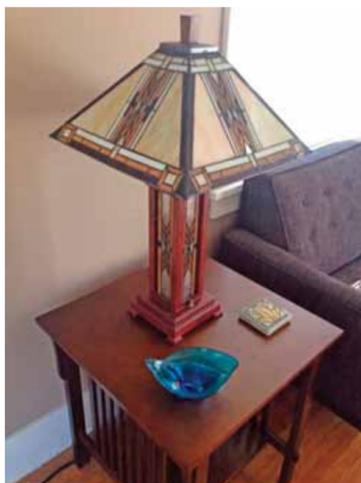


Photo shows a reproduction Craftsman style lamp, clay tile and mission style end table.



Photo shows the living room of writer Solvej Schou and her fiancé's century-old Craftsman rental house.



A home in the "Bungalow Heaven" district in Pasadena, Calif.