

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



SELINA KOK FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Keira Kaste plays in the fountains at the new Hammock Hollow Children's Garden at Bok Tower Gardens.

By Diane Daniel  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

LAKE WALES, Fla. — Keira Kaste, 9, was swinging in a rope hammock tied between two trees, a warm breeze beginning to dry her soaked clothing, when I asked what she thought of the new children's area at Bok Tower Gardens. Just as she flashed a broad grin and a thumbs up, her brother, Daniel, 11, ran up shouting, "Look! The water is coming out harder!" The pair then ran off for more of the wet stuff at a grouping of fountains, spray jets, misters, and foggers, all embedded in a natural-looking fern-edged rocky outcrop.

Bok Tower, open since 1929, is well known for its lush gardens and 60-bell carillon atop a 205-foot beautifully constructed structure covered with Georgia marble, Florida coquina, and floral ceramic tiles. It was built by Dutch immigrant and philanthropist Edward Bok, a former Ladies Home Journal editor, and sits on peaceful "Iron Mountain," a 295-foot peak on Lake Wales Ridge that still contains rolling orange groves. Bok's audience grew from the days of President Coolidge, who dedicated the gardens — and now longtime patrons' great-grandchildren have a place to call their own. Hammock Hollow Children's Garden opened late last year as part of a \$16 million expansion and restoration campaign that also added an edible garden and cooking area; increased accessibility throughout the gardens; added 8 acres of habitat, with walking trails throughout; and restored the tower and core garden.

When I visited on a Sunday in December, Hammock Hollow, Bok's public garden for the next generation, was a huge draw. A dozen or so multigenerational families parked themselves

## WHAT'S NEW AT BOK TOWER? ASK THE KIDS.

Spray fountains, gardens delight in Hammock Hollow

under the shade of live oaks while children scampered around the 2.7 acres of nature-inspired play areas that also are interesting for adults. Beautiful pebble mosaics of animals dot the walkway throughout the area, which includes a cypress boardwalk, spider climb, over-size acoustic instruments, and a Florida homestead area with an outdoor kitchen and vintage water hand pump.

Adjacent to the Hammock Hollow is the Edible Garden and Outdoor Kitchen, where public and private cooking demonstrations and meals are scheduled. The garden includes a fruit orchard, grape arbors, and raised beds for herbs

and vegetables.

A short walk from the Edible Garden is the new Wild Garden, an 8-acre area showcasing Florida native plants organized in various ecosystems, including a pine forest, oak hammock, wet prairie, wetland, bog, pine flatwoods, and pond. I'm not sure visitors would realize this, as I didn't see any labels, but it's a lovely natural-looking addition in contrast to the more-manicured historic gardens. The pond can be crossed via a 170-foot boardwalk that leads to "Window by the Pond," a small observatory space that looks onto a Florida bog ecosystem. The walk takes visitors into the historic gardens through the original 1929 entrance, which had become overshadowed by newer entry points.

One visitor I spoke with applauded the improvements at the destination he said partly inspired his and his wife's decision to retire to Lake Wales from Maine two years earlier.

"I like that more children are exposed to environmental things, and more mobility options make it more relevant to all ages," said Rudy Engholm, who joked that he was a "one-man chamber of commerce" for Bok Tower and its small-town surroundings. "We only live five minutes from this beauty and solace."

**BOK TOWER GARDENS** 1151 Tower Blvd., Lake Wales, 863-676-1408, [www.boktowergardens.org](http://www.boktowergardens.org). The visitor center, gardens, and trails are open daily year-round, with live carillon concerts at 1 and 3 p.m. Admission: \$12 adults, \$3 children 5 to 12. (LEGOLAND Florida ticket holders receive free admission for children under 12.)

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ALEX SANZ/AP/FILE 2016



DARKO BANDIC/AP/FILE 2013

A church on Lake Bled in Slovenia, homeland of Melania Trump (top).

## A Trump bump for Slovenia?

Melania Trump may be keeping a low profile as first lady, but her homeland of Slovenia is not.

According to figures released by the Eastern European country's Statistics Bureau, the number of overnight stays in Slovenia by American tourists jumped by 10 percent in 2016 when compared with 2015. Nearly 4 million foreign tourists visited the country of 2 million in 2016, up by about 10 percent.

Slovenia's tourism bureau is not letting the chance to cash in on the first lady pass it by. The country is promoting Sevnica, Melania Trump's hometown, prominently on its website.

"The town of Sevnica is known for Sevnica Castle, which stands over the city and its art gallery," the site reads. "The gallery holds different museum collections and hosts exhibitions. You can also visit one of the 47 churches in the municipality, or the archeological site of an Early Christian settlement from the 5th or 6th century at Ajdovski Gradec above Vranje."

The town — and the region — is known as one of the best wine-growing districts in Slovenia. The country is bordered by Croatia, Austria, Italy, and Hungary.

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

## HERE

### LIMOLINER CELEBRATES VALENTINE'S MONTH

Celebrate Valentine's Day all month long with LimoLiner's special "Take Two in February" offer. Whether you travel with your sweetie pie or your little child, fares are 2-for-1 when taking the high-end motor coach between Boston's Back Bay and Midtown Manhattan. Depending on chosen departure time, pay \$89 or \$99 each way for two passengers. To sweeten the deal, those traveling over Valentine's Day weekend (Feb. 11-14) will receive special



holiday treats. LimoLiner amenities include an attendant providing seat-side service, complimentary hot meals and drinks (wine after 6 p.m.), pre-selected, reclining leather seats with extended legroom, and all-inclusive on-board entertainment and Wi-Fi. To take advantage of the offer, input the promo code "TakeTwo2017" on the LimoLiner main page and book your two-passenger reservation for travel through Feb. 28. Offer is applicable to new bookings only; blackout dates apply (Feb. 17-20). [www.limoliner.com](http://www.limoliner.com)

### SKI JUMPING COMPETITION IN VERMONT

Don your warmest winter clothes and prepare to be amazed at the Harris Hill Ski Jumping competition in Brattleboro (Feb. 18-19). Jumpers from the United States and abroad flock to compete at the 90-meter Olympic-sized jump, soaring over 300 feet at speeds of 60 mph. The jump was rebuilt in 2008 to International Ski Federation specs, and is the site of 18 national championships. This year, visitors can watch a US Cup (Men and Women's Jumping and Nordic Combined) on Saturday, and the Fred H. Harris tournament on Sunday where the Winged Ski Trophy is up for grabs. Enjoy a festive atmosphere with food, music, souvenirs, and a beer tent. Buy a ticket at the gate (cash or check only) and be directed where to park. Gates opens at 10 a.m. both days. Adults: \$20; ages 6-12: \$15; under 6: free. Parking free. [harrishillskijump.com](http://harrishillskijump.com)

## THERE

### SCHIELE EXHIBIT IN VIENNA

Fans of Egon Schiele's haunting drawings and paintings won't want to miss the exhibition opening at the Albertina in Vienna (Feb. 22-June 18). One of the pioneers of the Wiener Moderne, a.k.a. Viennese Modernism, alongside Gustav Klimt and Oskar Kokoschka, Schiele's works are known for their "ruthlessly blunt" exploration of themes regarding human beings' existential loneliness. Organized to kick off the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Schiele's untimely death at age 28, the exhibition aims to introduce visitors to Schiele's collective works and his progression as a sketch artist and watercolorist. [www.albertina.at/en](http://www.albertina.at/en)

### COLORADO SNOW REPORTS

Those planning a ski trip to Colorado can find up-to-date snow conditions with Colorado Ski Country USA's snow report. The 24- and 48-hour snow totals are updated twice daily by 22 member resorts, including Aspen Mountain, Buttermilk, Snowmass, Telluride, and Copper Mountain. The report also includes mid-mountain depths, surface conditions and the number of lifts that are operating. In addition, the website includes links to all resorts, passes, and deals, and other resources including information on high alpine safety and tips for new



skiers. [coloradoski.com](http://coloradoski.com)

## EVERYWHERE

### HEATED CLOTHING CONQUERS COLD

Do freezing winter temperatures keep you huddled at home? Now you can stay warm and cozy — indoors and out — with Volt's heated clothing collection. The men's and women's half zip jacket is stylish, athletic and most of all stays warm with a 5 volt power-bank battery and USB charging cable. Featuring a two-zone system that targets the back of the neck and upper back, the Zero Layer heating technology transfers heat deep into your body's core for optimal warming. Designed with a tri-level switch so you can easily

modulate heat settings. Other products include heated snow mitts and gloves, vests, scarves, and footwear, such as socks and slippers. \$59.95-\$249.95. [voltheat.com](http://voltheat.com)

### NEW ONLINE SITE FOR BUSINESS TRAVELERS

Small and medium-size businesses can save money on flights and hotel rooms — and earn \$100 and more in gift cards — with Upside, a new travel company recently launched by Priceline founder Jay Walker. Simply enter departure/arrival cities, dates, and other requirements for either international or domestic trips and Upside's software will analyze more than 20,000 possible round-trip flight and hotel combinations before assembling six customized choices of business quality flights and hotel rooms. Customers choose flights, and then separately choose a hotel. The selections are then bundled together for one money-saving price. With each trip purchased, Upside customers get a free high-value gift card at Amazon or at more than 50 top retailers. Includes 24/7, concierge-level customer service by phone, chat, or text, and travelers receive all frequent flyer miles and credit card points. Despite the bundled price, travelers get the same cancellation and change privileges as if flights and hotel were booked separately. [upside.com](http://upside.com)

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