

**BRIEFLY**



BILL O'LEARY, THE WASHINGTON POST

The cherry trees along Washington, D.C.'s Tidal Basin are expected to reach their blossoming peak between April 11 and 14, the National Park Service says.

**CHERRY BLOSSOMS  
 IN D.C. PREDICTED  
 TO BE IN THE PINK  
 APRIL 11-14**

The National Park Service is predicting a peak bloom for Washington, D.C.'s cherry blossom trees between April 11 and 14. The average date for the peak bloom, when 70 percent of the trees around the Tidal Basin are in bloom, is April 4.

This year's National Cherry Blossom Festival, which annually marks the anniversary of Japan's gift of 3,000 cherry trees, runs Friday through April 12.

**Changes are advertised  
 for Carmel resort**

Carmel Valley Ranch, a 500-acre resort in the foothills of the Central Coast's Santa Lucia Mountains, will introduce a host of changes in the coming months.

Most significantly, this summer the resort will finish the addition of 30 indoor-outdoor guest suites and studios.

In May, a zero-edge pool and hot tub are scheduled to open with an outdoor bar and views of the hillside. Also in May, the resort plans to begin releasing its first four wines. A reserve dry rosé will be followed by a house pinot noir and house chardonnay in mid-summer and a reserve pinot noir in the fall.

For more information, visit [carmelvalleyranch.com](http://carmelvalleyranch.com)

**Vegas Strip's version of  
 bazaar shopping opens**

An outdoor shopping experience modeled after a more modern Middle Eastern marketplace, including a little bit of price haggling, has opened in front of Bally's Las Vegas.

The open-air Grand Bazaar Shops opened after about 15 months of construction, with numerous storefronts still "coming soon."

Looking for a \$2,000 crystal-encrusted football? A personalized T-shirt? Crazy socks? More than 100 spaces for retailers and restaurants sit on 2 acres of prime Strip-front property, steps away from other indoor malls.

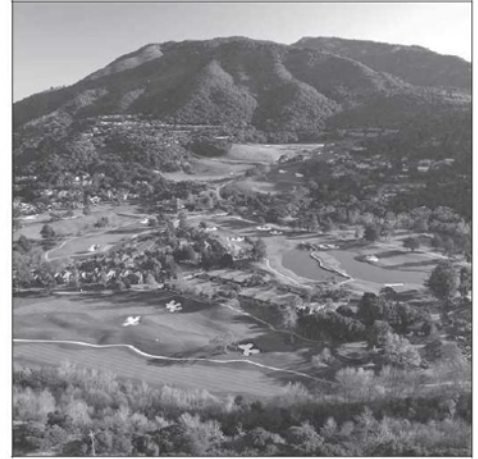
Caesars Entertainment Corp., which owns Bally's, also owns the parcel and partnered with the shopping district's developer and operator, Larry Siegel and his Juno Property Group. Siegel confirmed it cost about \$50 million to build.

A centerpiece of the project includes a 14-foot-diameter Swarovski crystal starburst above Swarovski's newest store, part of a nightly midnight light and sound show to mimic the ball drop in New York on New Year's Eve.

The shops are expected to be open daily from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

**Spring getaways without  
 kids and crowds touted**

If you want to get away for spring break, but would prefer not to share it with hard-partying college stu-



COURTESY OF CARMEL VALLEY RANCH

Additional guest suites, a hot tub and a zero-edge pool are among improvements due to be completed by summer at Carmel Valley Ranch.

dents and families with toddlers in tow, travel agents say it's essential to choose a destination that these groups can't afford, or simply choose not to visit.

"Presumably, due to the horrifically cold weather, we've been getting more requests for last-minute warm weather destinations than in years past," said Jay Johnson, president of Coastline Travel Advisors in Garden Grove, part of the Virtuoso network of agencies.

For those striving to avoid the record-setting temperatures as well as the spring break fracas, Johnson and his colleagues suggest the west coast of Costa Rica or the Hawaiian island of Lanai.

"Both do not attract boatloads of children during that time of the year," he said.

Costa Rica, it turns out, is on many agents' lips. Jeffrey Krudop, manager of Travel Leaders in Fort Wayne, Ind., recommends Guanacaste in northwestern Costa Rica, where visitors can explore volcanoes, hike through a rain forest and go white-water rafting. (March and April tend to be Costa Rica's drier months, noted Debbie Kirk, owner of Travel Leaders in Lynnwood, Wash.)

For a last-minute domestic getaway, consider Sanibel Island in Florida. Many of the hotels are sold out for spring break, but Kate Rosevear, president and owner of Travel Leaders in Plymouth, Mich., said some of the smaller, private hotels still have availability.

"One of the best things about Sanibel and neighboring Captiva, apart from the miles of gorgeous beaches and the relatively calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, is it is just far enough off the beaten path and pricey enough that its appeal is mostly to adults and/or families with young children," she said in an email. "No 'out of control' spring breakers here."

**Vietnam exhibit will  
 honor CBS' Bob Simon**

CBS will sponsor an upcoming

exhibit about the Vietnam War at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., to honor "60 Minutes" correspondent Bob Simon and his five decades of war reporting.

"Reporting Vietnam" will open May 22 at the museum, recalling how journalists reported the war in the television era.

The exhibit will feature Simon, Walter Cronkite and others. Curators say it will pose the question: "Did the press lose the war?"

Simon was one of the last journalists to leave Vietnam following the fall of Saigon in 1975. He reported on conflicts worldwide. Simon died Feb. 11 after a nearly 50-year career at CBS.

In a statement, CBS News President David Rhodes says Simon's reporting from Vietnam in the 1970s cemented his role as the pre-eminent war correspondent.

**Tourists eye village  
 for rent in Hungary**

Rooms at Hungary's village for rent are going fast. More than 800 inquiries and reservations for 280 guests have been made since Mayor Kristof Pajer recently began advertising the village of Megyer, available for 20,000 forints, about \$760, a day.

Pajer said tourists are coming from as far away as the U.S., Australia, South Africa and Sweden, and the village "is booked solid in August and most of April and May."

Amenities offered by Megyer, population 18 and 120 miles southwest of Budapest, include seven guest houses that sleep 39 people, a bus stop, horses, chickens and 10 acres of farmland.

Some guests have chosen to re-name the village streets during their stay, a perk which comes with a replica of the street sign.

For more information, visit [jofogas.hu/veszprem/Egy\\_falu\\_kiado\\_23935180.htm](http://jofogas.hu/veszprem/Egy_falu_kiado_23935180.htm), though you'll probably want to translate the information into English.