



June 27-29, 2008

STAY NATION

Cover story

Staycations may be the travel buzzword du jour, but who really wants to pitch a tent in their backyard and call it a getaway? Not us. Still, with the economy slumping and gas prices soaring, we're all looking for diversions that won't break the bank. USA TODAY's **Laura Bly** and **Jayne Clark** asked six travel journalists based in Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Seattle and Washington to pick places no more than a tank of gas away. **Where they would choose to go, 2D.**



By John Bazemore, AP

Downtown Atlanta

Ocean Voyager tank: Georgia Aquarium tunnel allows underwater views.

Recommended by: Jennifer Senator, dining and travel editor for Atlanta magazine

Why: Hip, luxurious hotels are luring suburbanites into the various parts of the city. The just-opened W Atlanta in Midtown (with its bliss spa and Spice Market restaurant) is within walking distance of the High Museum of Art and Piedmont Park. In tony Buckhead, the new Mansion on Peachtree delivers a butler with every guestroom (plus vineyard-inspired treatments at its 29 Spa) and provides easy access to upscale shopping at Phipps Plaza and Lenox Square. In downtown Atlanta, the new Ellis and Twelve Centennial Park hotels and the rehabbed Glenn Hotel are within walking distance of crowd-pleasing attractions

such as the Georgia Aquarium, CNN and the World of Coca-Cola.

Don't miss: Straits, the new Asian-flavored restaurant owned by rapper/actor (and local resident) Ludacris in concert with chef Chris Yeo.

What's the deal: The \$89 MVP (Most Valuable Package) on sale through Sept. 21 buys admission to five popular attractions: an Atlanta Braves game, Georgia Aquarium, New World of Coca-Cola, Six Flags Over Georgia and Stone Mountain Park. Hotel discounts can be added to the deal.

Information: 800-285-2682; atlanta.net