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Bambino on Board

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At a Distant Hotel Bar, a Baby Can Be the Best Companion

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Jerry Soverinsky/ AOL Travel
It was 1 a.m.

I'd been there before. The names and faces were different, of course, but the late-night, hotel bar scene is always the same. Young and old professionals, their faces tired from work and travel, cradled their drinks in a big city [airport hotel](#) after a day of meetings and conferences.

I sat there, in my familiar seat, at the back of the bar where I could survey the people and surroundings. Only this time, my company and purpose was different: I was reading "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?" to Max.

"Turn the page," I said, searching plaintively for any signs of fatigue but finding none. Max looked up at me, his eyes wide, and shrieked excitedly.

"I see a blue horse looking at me," I whispered quietly, though Max fixed his gaze beyond me, to the massive wine bar and its two female aerialists, floating effortlessly as they retrieved champagne bottles for guests.

Sightseeing Stops: With a Trip to the Zurich Children's Hospital

It's the end of our second full day in Zurich, which was an unexpected layover. We've been dragging our feet a little because our luggage only arrived the night before and Jana and I wanted to make sure Max was 100% healthy before driving to Italy.

Earlier in the day, we visited Zurich's Children's Hospital, a contemporary health care facility where both a nurse and doctor proclaimed that whatever had been bothering Max 48 hours earlier had indeed passed.

"His energy is wunderbar," the nurse said, as Max played with a pulse monitor tied around his (little) big toe.

We spent the remainder of the day sightseeing in Zurich, wandering along the Limmat river and window-shopping along the city's Bahnhofstrasse, a Magnificent Mile-like avenue of upscale shops and eateries. It was a bank holiday, and much of the city seemed eerily quiet, so we considered ourselves fortunate to find a patisserie open where Jana and I quickly became fans of a Toblerone-infused turnover (genius).



Jerry Soverinsky/AOL Travel

The Late Night Games Babies Play

We headed back to our hotel in the early evening, curious to see whether Max's body clock had transitioned to the seven-hour time change and we were relieved when he fell asleep midway through just a third story. It was 8:30 p.m.

Jana and I exchanged a congratulatory look and, exhausted from the past several days (two? three?) of travel, we were both soon fast asleep.

A few minutes past 10 p.m., Max woke up. He was not awake as in needing a burp or cradle or readjustment to fall back asleep, but awake as in his body clock said it was only 3 p.m. and it was time to play.

So we played.

And we played.

And we played.

By 11 p.m., toys and books were scattered around our room and among our luggage, an obstacle course of diversions that did little to sap Max's energy.

By midnight, Max was belly-down in the middle of our king size bed, struggling to propel himself forward in what would be his first-ever crawl (so close).

By 1 a.m., I'd given up on sleep and headed to the lobby, pushing Max in his stroller as we weaved our way through the hotel's massive atrium lobby bar, settling at a table that allowed us to survey the bustling scene. As I placed Max on my lap, I realized that our sleep pants matched (a detail that our server would later compliment).

By 1:30 a.m., I had finished my second decaf coffee, and Max and I were on our seventh reading of Brown Bear.

"Teacher, teacher, what do you see?" I said to Max, whose face lit up as he saw Jana approach from the glass elevator.

"I see children looking at me," I said as Jana joined us at the table.

Max looked up at me and over at Jana and began kicking his feet and laughing.

Best bar night ever.

Keep up with Jerry and the bambino on [Twitter](#).