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Travel Scoop

The Newsmagazine
for Members of
The Travel Society

Vol. 20, No. 10 December 2002

Galapagos: The Last Eden

— by Ted and Judy van der Veen



Land iguana, Galapagos (van der Veen)

Marine iguanas basking in the sun, sharing the rough lava shore with brightly-coloured crabs and flightless cormorants. Frisky sea turtles frolicking in the bay. Sea lions stretched out on the beach as far as the eye can see, their pups as curious about you as the canine kind. A 65-year-old tortoise whose head was the inspiration for Hollywood's ET, blocking your path. An albatross chick, his neck still covered in the curly down of the very young, in his rocky nest. A blue-footed booby on the march to check you out. A great blue heron, pencil slim, his eyes following your every move. A feeding frenzy of kamikaze pelicans and

storm petrels diving for dinner from the sea. Penguins standing at attention. Masked boobies preening their chicks. Gold and brown land iguanas scurrying through the dried leaves. Magnificent frigate birds, their scarlet throat sacs engorged. Lava lizards attempting to stare you down. Giant rays floating just under the surface of the sea. Darwin finches, Hood

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TravelScoop

The Newsmagazine for Members of
The Travel Society

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From your Editor's desk...



Let me write about something light-hearted in this, the last month of the year. Have you seen the new Miramax movie *Frida*? It is, in fact, ultimately a sad movie, but it is so full of life and glimpses of Mexico that it is worth a mention in a travel magazine.

It is hard to travel in historic Mexico without encountering the ghosts of artists Frida Kahlo and her husband Diego Rivera. And as their lives and works become better known internationally there is sure to be increasing interest in viewing their art and discovering the places where they lived their tumultuous lives. And the movie is sure to add to this interest.

In the film, viewers see the homes (or in some cases replicas of them) that the artists lived in, as well as the home of Leon Trotsky (definitely not the real one), many street scenes (that I believe were filmed in San Luis Potosi) and the great ruins of Teotihuacan, just about an hour's drive from Mexico City (they most definitely are the real thing!).

If you have my article in the October 1999 edition of *TravelScoop* to hand you can re-read how to reach Frida's astonishing Blue House, now the Frida Kahlo Museum, in the pleasant Mexico City suburb of Coyoacan. The house is as it was when Frida lived (and died) there, and there's also a gallery room containing some of her works. The real, and austere, house where Trotsky lived stands just a couple of blocks away and is now the interesting Museo de Leon Trotsky. You can see the bullet holes in his bedroom from an early assassination attempt. Apparently the joined pink and blue houses that Kahlo and Rivera inhabited in neighbouring San Angel are now the Diego Rivera Studio Museum and can be visited (I have yet to do this) while in nearby Xochimilco the Dolores Olmedo Patino Museum holds a large collection of both artists' works, as do many Mexico City museums.

See the movie - I'm sure you'll enjoy it - and then I'm sure you'll think about including Mexico in your travel plans. There is so much to discover there.

Time to sign off, but before I do I wish you all much joy over the holiday season and send my best wishes for happy travels in 2003.

coming in *January*

- *The Outer Banks, N.C.*

- *Holy Week in Antiqua, Guatemala*

- *From Andes Mountain to Amazon Jungle*

Update Items

Readers who live outside major urban centres may like to be reminded that at this time of year many city hotels offer packages and week-end specials for visitors coming to town for some seasonal treats, shopping, etc. So it's always worth enquiring about specials if a city trip is in your plans, especially over a week-end when hotels that usually attract business guests are not so busy. An example that is being offered here in Toronto: the **Crowne Plaza Toronto Centre** on Front Street (right in the middle of the city 'action') is offering a discounted special of \$159 for a junior suite (or best available room), breakfast for two, late checkout, a welcome gift and discounts on admission to a selection of Toronto museums. Call 1 800 422 7969 or visit www.torontocentre.crowneplaza.com. Special available from 1 December to 20 January.

News from **Korea** that the popular **Temple Stay Cultural Experience** offered to foreign visitors during the World Cup period will continue through spring of 2003. Participants can learn about the lifestyle of Buddhist monks, Korean culture, tea ceremonies and crafts while staying in serene temple surroundings. Costs are from C\$48, all-inclusive, for a two-day programme. For details visit www.templestaykorea.net or contact the Korea Tourism Organization at 1 800 TOUR KOREA or www.tour2korea.com

Would a 10-day sun or ski getaway fit your itinerary? (Most packages are per week.) **Flextours** of Montréal call themselves "the flexible vacation specialists". These tours must be reserved through your travel agent, who may have the brochures, or ask them to call 1 866 210 TOUR or visit www.flex-tour.ca

News as we go to print ... those special deals for **Barbados** detailed in our July/August edition (p.16) have been extended to include January & February.

This Month's Winning Scoop

Free Flights for Aeroplan and Diners Club Members

by Sonia Simes

In the May-June issue of the Air Canada newsletter sent to Aeroplan members, an article caught my eye. I am ever on the look out for cheaper fares, and the newsletter article said "the Diners Club Maple Leaf Credit Card is the only credit card that gives you a FREE Air Canada companion ticket every calendar year of your membership on any scheduled Air Canada operated flight from Canada internationally." I was not able to find anyone who had tested this offer, so I went ahead and enrolled.

The cost of the card is high: C\$375.00 year. But upon payment I did indeed receive a coupon for my free companion ticket from Air Canada. I made my reservations directly with AC for a journey from northern Manitoba to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The fare would normally be \$1,450 return. However, when I mentioned the free companion ticket, my ticket price was raised to \$2,000. (My travel agent tells me that I got boosted to a 'Bravo' category, whatever that means.) A quick calculation told me that two tickets would have cost me \$2,900 but with my "free" companion tickets, after all the various taxes were included (security taxes in Canada and Mexico, for example), the fare for the two of us came to \$2,300. This ended up as a small saving when the cost of the credit card itself is taken into account. But perhaps on a longer trip such as to Europe or Australia there may be greater savings.

However, there are a variety of other perks that come with the Diners Club card: access to Maple Leaf lounges (normally \$20 per visit for guests), Executive Class Airport check-in, air travel insur-

Members are Rewarded for Sharing!

TS rewards members for all submissions published.

The Winning Scoop receives a 1-year membership extension.

Your Scoops receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Favourite Places receive a 3-issue membership extension.

Reader Reports receive extensions depending on length.

Submission Guidelines: TS welcomes reader submissions but cannot guarantee they will be used. We reserve the right to edit submissions should they be used. It is very important to include specific travel details: costs, discounts, addresses, telephone and fax numbers, etc., for the benefit of other readers. Submissions can be sent by mail, e-mail: ann@thetravelsociety.com or on diskettes.

ance of \$400,000.00, car rental insurance, and an out-of country health insurance for 30 days (to age 69) for \$99.00. This is a very good price if there are not too many restrictions. (I have not tested it yet.) There are more perks too numerous to mention.

Is it a good deal? In retrospect, I should have questioned the category my fare was placed in. With a longer trip the savings would no doubt be greater. And as I live in a small community, the Diners Club card is not useful like a Visa or Mastercard. I would be happy to give more details to anyone who has questions, or I'd be interested to hear if others have made greater savings with their "free" ticket.

Changing subjects, if anyone wants to know how Puerta Vallarta is recovering after hurricane Kenna, a good web site is www.pvmirror.com. I was not able to find out how much damage was done to a hotel in Bucerias (15 miles from PV). However, there was a guest editorial (click on "Puerta Vallarta shines") by Wayne Franklin from Tropicasa Realty with an e-mail address. I mailed an inquiry to him and within a few days received a report that all was well in Bucerias. The people of PV are very worried that tourists will not come. Reports of dengue fever do not help, but there has been dengue in other years and it hasn't been reported. I learned from this web site that the only hotel heavily damaged in PV is the Sheraton and their guests had been moved to other hotels. ☹

Sonia Simes,
The Pas, MB
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Your Scoops

Winter Getaway to Montreal

Restrictions or surcharges on health insurance for foreign travel are a reality for many mature couples. So during last winter we planned some short-term holidays within Canada for the spring and summer.

But to break up the long wait for spring, we booked a city holiday close to our home in eastern Ontario. For us, Montreal is only three hours away on Via Rail (we decided on a first class treat). Our travel agent booked us into the Chateau Royale Hotels Suites centrally located on Rue Crescent where, for \$89.00 a night, we had a junior suite with bedroom and kitchenette. This accommodation is normally about \$119, but our discount was coupled with our first-class VIA Rail ticket, which we had to show at registration. We provided ourselves with breakfasts and the occasional light meal – gourmet quality – as the wonderful delicatessen in the basement of Ogilvy's department store was only two blocks away. And for dinner treats we were surrounded by a plethora of Montreal's gourmet restaurants to choose from. Major museums were just short walks away from our accommodation, as were McGill and Concordia universities, while the Metro was less than two blocks away.

Weather permitting, downtown Montreal is great for walking. There is not a lot of activity

in the Old Town in late winter, but the city claims the world's largest area of underground shopping, and on a rainy day one hardly needs to be above ground. Taxis are plentiful and their drivers courteous and as distances in the compact downtown are short, averaged \$8.00 a trip. The Metro is easy to use, and although day-passes are available, we found the special price on books of tickets more useful.

Only a few blocks from our hotel were Montreal's finest historical, architectural and fine arts museums. Eight minutes away on the subway was Place des Arts, offering Puccini's *Tosca* with the excellent Opera d'Montreal. The next night we had rush seats (\$16.00) for the world-renowned Montreal Symphony Orchestra. Concerts for every taste seem to be offered all over town.

Language a problem? Not in the least. I began every telephone conversation with "bonjour", but did not expect that bilingual service people would want to hear any more of my French! Montreal includes large communities of Greeks and Italians and everyone seems at ease, and proud of their great city. Now we plan to return and enjoy Montreal in another season.

Bill Brummitt
Carrying Place, ON

The Chateau Royal Hôtel Suites is located at 1420 rue Crescent, Montreal, PQ H3G 2B7, tel: 514 848 848 or 1 800 363 0335, fax: 514 848 1891, www.chateauroyal.com/ Their slogan is "Enjoy a suite for the price of a room" and the published prices start at \$119, although Mr Brummitt enjoyed a special price as mentioned above. – Ed.

Maps and Wal-Mart

If you're planning a driving trip through the States soon, you may like to know that the 2003 edition of *The Rand-McNally Road Atlas (United States, Canada & Mexico)* which sells in most US locations for US\$11.95 can be bought at any Wal-Mart for US\$4.95. Both versions are available, the regular and the "Easy-to-Read" with the larger, simplified maps. Since they were such a bargain, I bought both. They will certainly come in handy for our road trip this winter. We plan to leave sometime in November and drive across the U.S. during the winter months.

The regular Atlas also includes the list of Wal-Mart stores in North America. Do I hear you asking, "What's the big deal?" Well, did you know that Wal-Mart permits overnight stays in their parking lots for trailers, vans and RV's? Obviously they aren't anyone's idea of a perfect campsite, but the knowledge may come in handy now and again as you're touring. Apparently, the Camping Associations tried to put a halt to the practice but the court ruled in favour of Wal-Mart. A rather wise move for Wal-Mart, considering that travellers will probably take the opportunity to shop at their stores. When I contacted Wal-Mart to confirm this arrangement I received the following reply from their head office: "While we do not offer electrical service or accommodations typically necessary for recreational vehicle motorists, we do permit RV parking on our store lots, as we are able. Parking is granted by individual stores based on availability of parking lot space

and contingent upon local regulations. Please call store management to request parking permission. To obtain store telephone numbers scroll to the bottom of the www.wal-mart.com home page and select "store finder". This site will let you search by city and state and provides a map pinpointing the store. We sell a special Wal-Mart edition of Rand-McNally Atlas in our stores that includes Wal-Mart/Sam's Club locations in the US, Mexico and Canada. The cover denotes "includes Wal-Mart Store Directory". If you cannot locate this special edition ask for assistance at the Customer Courtesy Desk."

*Anne Raymond
Asbestos, PQ*

The Historic Resort of Thomasville

Thomasville, Georgia, is located about 56 km almost due north of Tallahassee. It is a treasure trove of history, culture, architecture, museums and special events. During the late 1880s it gained national and international fame as a haven for wealthy northerners. The first visitors came for health reasons. The pine-scented air was deemed to hold a cure for pulmonary ailments. Very soon the forests, rivers and abundance of wildlife attracted riders, fisherfolk and hunters.

It became known as the "Winter Resort of the South". Wealthy visitors bought land and built magnificent plantation homes and mansions, almost rivalling the palatial homes referred to as the "Newport Cottages". Many of these properties still belong to the

Dear Ann

You asked that I write you to let you know how our South African adventure with Cyril Payle worked out. It was simply terrific! We are so grateful to you and *TravelScoop* for putting us in touch with Cyril. We were by ourselves with him for a total of 12 days – first of all enjoying his 9-day *Mammoth Garden Tour* route and then for several days in the Cape Town area. It was a joy to explore his wonderful country with him and to also have a chance to hear his concerns and hopes for South Africa. It is truly a beautiful country and has so much potential; one can only hope that the many challenges facing it can be met and overcome. Certainly the tourism infrastructure is in place and it's such good value too, once you have paid the air fare. We would be happy to share our experiences with any readers who might enquire. Best wishes.

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P.S. You might also be interested to know that we are going for the third time to Mule House in St. Kitts for our winter holiday - another *TravelScoop* tip! (See TS Feb/March 1999, p. 7.)

descendents of the original owners and some have been converted into luxurious bed and breakfast establishments. All buildings and grounds are exceptionally well maintained and the whole town is virtually free of litter.

Three of the mansions stand out. Pebble Hill is open to the public and is the south's premier plantation home. It nestles within 3,000 acres of beautifully maintained grounds and has more than 40 rooms. The owners were avid collectors. Collections include elaborate place card holders, umbrellas, porcelain, Indian arrowheads and above all a large number of Audubon prints. Guided tours of the house take up to two hours and many more hours can be spent in the grounds, visiting the historic cemetery, a log cabin schoolhouse and a stable

with a collection of antique carriages.

Melhana has a private theatre. The owners had such influence that the very first screening of *Gone with the Wind* took place there in 1939. Melhana now caters to special events such as weddings, receptions and private parties of up to 300. Over thirty suites and cottages can be rented and in the restaurant jackets for gentlemen are still a must.

The Lapham-Patterson House was built for a wealthy shoe merchant from Chicago. It too is open to the public and known for its fish-scale shingles, a porch fit for a Chinese Empress and a cantilevered balcony.

The Cultural Center has an impressive permanent art display, including original works by Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, Ingres and Dufy. But it is the many outstanding theatrical and musical performances presented in the Center's Auditorium which give Thomasville a further claim to fame. World-class artists find in Thomasville a most appreciative and enthusiastic audience.

Every month brings special events which range from Antique Shows, to a Plantation Wildlife Arts Festival, The Rose Show, an amazing Fly-in of mostly

vintage and privately owned planes of every make and, of course, a Victorian Christmas.

Among the natural wonders is The Big Oak. At 322 years old it is wider than Niagara Falls is deep and the largest live oak east of the Mississippi. Roses are the favourite flower in the area and are found in most gardens. The public garden features more than 500 rose bushes, which bloom well into October. The Annual Rose Show and Festival includes parades, street dances and much more.

We stayed at the conveniently located Hampton Inn (1950 GA Highway 122, Thomasville, GA 31757, tel: 229 227 0040, fax: 229 227 0060, www.hamptoninthomasville.com/html/home.htm, rates from US\$59) where an extensive continental breakfast is included in the room rate. We dined at Ryan's which offers an outstanding, extensive and inexpensive hot and cold buffet and is also renowned for steaks from an à la carte menu.

The Welcome Center provides excellent information on accommodation, both hotels and B&Bs, restaurants, events and opportunities for shopping. They can be reached by calling 1 800 704 2350 and their e-mail service is also very efficient: welcome@thomasvillega.com

Barbara Redlich,
North York, ON

Thomasville, Georgia, was also mentioned in [TravelScoop](#) in January 2002, when a B&B - the Canadian-owned 1854 Wright cottage - was recommended by the author of the article, Vera Howard. (See p. 12 of that edition, and the photograph on p. 13.) Contact details again: tel: 912 225 9922, e-mail: 1854wh@rose.net. - Ed..



The Lapham Patterson House (Redlich)

continued from page 1

mockingbirds, swallow-tailed gulls, the list goes on and on. And all of them seem to know full well that this is their home, their territory, and you are the intruder.

This place is truly “for the birds”, and the animals, and the reptiles! Where else but the Galapagos, that protected archipelago 1000 km west of the Ecuadorian coast which so inspired Charles Darwin?

Today over 60,000 visitors from around the world visit the Galapagos Islands every year. The Ecuadorian government does control tourism strictly, but the attraction of ready cash is very tempting and the number of visitors continues to increase. Most spend a few days island-hopping by boat. As each island has its own unique flora, fauna and geology, cruising is the logical way to go. There are boats carrying from 10-90 people, but the majority are in the 16-24 passenger range. Tours vary from 3, 4, 7 to 10 days. As you visit one or two of the 13 major islands per day, the shorter cruises do mean you miss a lot. A week will allow you to visit 8-10 islands and to see the best known mammals and birds. All groups visit the Charles Darwin Research Station where you can watch videos about the conservation efforts on the islands, as well as walk freely amongst the giant tortoises. While on board, typically, there is a morning excursion, a short cruise after lunch, an afternoon excursion, and motoring some or all of the night time hours. No one is allowed on the islands after sunset. The boat is usually anchored for meals. By law every group must be accompanied by a registered naturalist with a solid background in natural sciences and the number of people ashore at any location at a given time is strictly limited. This is a good reason to choose a tour with about 20 participants, as your entire group can go ashore at the same time.

One must also abide by the rules to stay on the path and to keep to a distance of 3 meters from the animals. (However, as nobody has yet explained this to the ani-

mals, you will find that sometimes they will approach you or will park themselves right beside or in the middle of the path, and it is not always possible to take another route.) And of course, one must do nothing to disturb the animals, which may mean putting a bandaid over the flash on your camera if you cannot over-ride the automatic flash. It also means not talking loudly or clapping your hands to get a reaction. You will have ample opportunity for the best nature photography you can imagine; there is no need to stage a shot. Need we say that smoking, drinking and littering are forbidden on the islands? (You will have lots to eat and drink on board.) Shore excursions are by Zodiac; most landings are wet ones on the beach, a few dry ones on rock or concrete landing pads. The paths may be sandy, but they may also be rough and rocky. Take sturdy walking shoes; you may also wish to carry a walking stick as you occasionally do quite a balancing act. Some of the island walks have strenuous climbs. Excursions last from 1-4 hours. At least once a day there will be shore time for swimming or snorkelling. However, the water is rather cold and you may well choose not to swim. Avid snorkellers may want to take a wetsuit and their own gear, although the boats do have some snorkelling masks and flippers.

The Galapagos lie directly on the equator, but this is no “tropical” paradise. The Humboldt current from

Antarctica brings cold water up the coast of South America. The islands are also far out in the Pacific, 1000 km from the continental land mass. Tourism is popular year round. January to April has more rainfall and the temperature can get quite hot and sticky (over 30°C.) Incongruously, this is also the season of the most sunshine. From June to November, the temperatures will be in the low 20s, but particularly in our summer months, fog may linger over the islands and the waters may get rough. May and December are shoulder season. We were there in early December,



Galapagos tortoise (van der Veen)

daytime temperatures ranged from 20-25°C, much cooler at night, and for the first three days we had overcast conditions either morning or afternoon, but not both, while the end of the week was clear and sunny all day long. Flights from the mainland leave Quito and stop at Guayaquil along the coast; count on about three hours to arrive at Isla Baltra, the airport for the Galapagos. A bus will then take you to the small ferry going to the next island where, after a bus ride across the island, you will board your tour boat. There are only two villages of any size on the islands, and shopping is pretty well restricted to t-shirts and postcards. As of July 2001, the U.S. dollar is the official currency of Ecuador, which includes the Galapagos.

Do try to have a few days on the mainland before or after your island tour. Quito is a large urban centre with a wide assortment of hotels and restaurants. Be sure to visit the Gold Museum which has an excellent collection of Inca and other tribal artefacts. The Equator is just north of the city and bus or taxi excursions to 'La Mitad del Mundo' are popular. If you have more time, however, consider a day trip to the town of Otavalo which has a very colourful crafts market. En route you can stop at another, quieter Equator monument in a rural setting. We had three full days in Quito before our Galapagos trip began; one day for a city tour, another for the trip to Otavalo, and the third to visit the museum and wander on our own.

If you have time to spend independently in Quito we can strongly recommend Raquel de Torres of Trails

Nature Tours (e-mail: trails@cosinet.net, fax: 011 593 22 871344, cell phone 593 99 490328, or write P.O. Box 63A, Quito, Ecuador. Raquel's husband is a well-known leader of bird-watching tours throughout South America.) We stayed at the small (11 room) Hostal de la Rabida in the hotel and restaurant district. It is a converted house with a welcoming staff, very comfortable rooms, and a cosy fire in the lounge where you can enjoy a pre-dinner drink. With breakfast and taxes added, a room for two is about \$72 U.S. This is the hotel where our group stayed the nights before and after our Galapagos tour. (*Note: as we go to press this property's website – www.hostalrabida.com – cannot be accessed. Let's hope the problem is temporary – Ed.*)

We travelled to the Galapagos with ElderTreks in Toronto because we were appending the Galapagos tour to the Bolivia-Peru adventure we had already booked with them. Their tours are for those 50+ and are all-inclusive. Several Canadian tour operators (including, now, The Travel Society) have tours to the Galapagos. For any nature lover, a visit to these unique islands is a trip of a lifetime! ■

*Ted and Judy van der Veen
live in Campbellville, ON*

You'll find details of The Travel Society's Galapagos and Ecuador tour on p. 24. The cruise boat we use fits the criteria described by Ted and Judy above, especially with regard to the number of people – 20 – aboard. Please call 1 877 926 2500 for details.

From the Bookshelf

A few last-minute gift ideas ... or treats for you! There must be someone on your list who loves Scotch whisky and travelling. Treat them to a copy of *Scotland and its Whiskies*, by Michael Jackson with 120 beautiful colour photographs by Harry Cory Wright. This volume takes the reader on twelve journeys through the countryside of Scotland, into the famous distilleries and finally through the bars of Edinburgh. Browse through this book and you, too, will wish you were enjoying "the aromas from the glass mingled with the sea air." "It was cold," the narrative continues, "but the smoky whisky warmed us like a driftwood fire. As the sun set, the sky glowed with promise for tomorrow. In the morning, we would take the ferry to the isles ..." Published by Raincoast Books of Vancouver, 144 pp, \$34.95.

George Fischer and Claude Bouchard are two photographers who have the power to help us appreciate Canada, from misty mornings to flaming sunsets, from spring through to winter's depth. Their *Sentinels in the Stream: Lighthouses of the St. Lawrence River* (the Boston Mills Press, 96 pp, \$29.95) and other Canadian photography books make ideal stocking stuffers that will have you dreaming of travelling. You should be able to find a selection in your local bookstore.

The new Reader's Digest *Complete Road Atlas of Canada* would make a fine, and practical, gift. With its 200 full-colour photographs, trip planner section, touring guides and tourist information, this atlas is far more than a collection of road maps. Available from bookstores or by calling 1 800 465 0780. 464 pp, \$59.95.

Québec's Eastern Townships

Appeal to All

by Ann Wallace

To ski, or not to ski? That is often the question. Many people love to ski, as I do, but not necessarily every day of their vacation. Sometimes one half of a couple might welcome a day off from the slopes to relax, shop, sightsee or perhaps be pampered in a spa. Sometimes a family or group of friends would like a winter holiday together with skiing as a component of the vacation rather than the whole focus of the vacation. Does this profile fit you?

But most ski resorts are not conducive to that kind of vacation. A ski resort is a ski resort, full of people clomping about on their big boots, skis on shoulders, focussed solely on getting to the slopes. The beautiful scenery is often cluttered up with ski-lift line-ups and the village shops sell only ski gear. Put your feet up during the day here and you're sure to feel a little guilty.

Not if you choose to go to the Eastern Townships of Québec. This

beautiful area with the plain name offers all you could dream of for a winter vacation. Here, amidst fine scenery, lie charming villages with English and French names where Catholic and Protestant churches often stand side by side and the antique and other shops are a delight. Here nestle welcoming inns and B&B's and country restaurants featuring delicious local produce. Here mountains soar over glacier-formed lakes, awaiting the day when you, too, decide to leave the charms of your cozy accommodation to enjoy the snowy slopes. And then you'll find the ski areas exceptional-

ly well-run and surprisingly uncrowded during the week.

Add to all this the fact that the area is just 45 minutes' drive from all that Montréal has to offer and a couple of hours from the delights of Québec City and you have a perfect winter destination.

If I were asked to choose a favourite ski destination in the Eastern Townships I would be in quandary. Last February I travelled through the area, taking a short vacation (but, of course, with an article for *TravelScoop* in mind) before attending a tourism conference in Québec City. I skied at Bromont, Sutton,

Mont-Orford and Owl's Head and had spectacular days at all the resorts. The slopes were varied and well-groomed, the food offered in the resort cafés was tasty, the people I encountered were friendly and jolly, the week-day slopes were uncrowded and the views from the moun-



The Ripplecove Inn (Wallace)

tain tops were spectacular, especially from Owl's Head which towers over Lake Memphremagog. I had a delightful conversation with a 74-year-old woman over lunch at Owl's Head who told me she bought a mid-week senior's ski pass for the whole season at a great price and skied whenever she could. She was pleased to practise her English with me (far better than my French) and confided that her house badly needed dusting, but that she wasn't going to dust while the sunny slopes were waiting to be enjoyed!

I stayed in three different locations during my

explorations of the Eastern Townships. Auberge West Brome is conveniently located in West Brome, a short drive between the Bromont and Sutton ski areas, while Orford and Owl's Head are also easily accessible, though just a little further away. This Auberge offers a traditionally-styled 19th century farmhouse inn with an excellent dining room (perhaps you will try the famous Brome duck here), with accommodation in modern condo-style buildings set in the grounds. These accommodations would be ideal for a family or a group, with their smart living rooms with TV's and fireplaces, dining area, kitchenette and separate bedrooms. (Contact details of all accommodation at the end of this article.)

Just a few miles from West Brome lies the village of Lac Brome (also known as Knowlton). If you'd like accommodation within walking distance of a pretty, shop-filled village the Lakeview Inn may be for you. This historic 1874 inn once welcomed wealthy visitors who travelled from major Québec cities or from across the border in stage-coaches. This is a large and busy inn, reminiscent of an old English pub inn, especially in its bar that is popular with locals and visitors alike. Some of the rooms here are small and rather aged, but the inn's popularity cannot be denied and you're sure to have a good time if you enter into the homey, bustling spirit of the place.

A treat of a different kind was awaiting me at my next destination, just a few miles away near the village of Ayer's Cliff. There, in a beautiful lakeside setting on a peninsula on Lake Massawippi, weary travellers are thrilled to find themselves in the famous, quietly luxurious Ripplecove Inn. It's welcoming in any season, but in winter becomes very special, as the fires crackle and the bar beckons while the setting sun shimmers gold over the icy lake.

I mentioned a visit to a spa at the beginning of this

article. I don't indulge very often, but on a cold grey day when the slopes didn't entice, I thought I'd give myself a treat of a different kind. Spa Eastman, just off Autoroute 10 and about 10 km from Lac Brome, was the first destination spa in Canada and in March of this year it celebrated its 25-year anniversary. Visitors can call in for a variety of pampering treatments, or can indulge themselves with a longer stay here. There are tranquil rooms both in the main building and in rustic cottages in the grounds. The location is beautiful, you'll meet your fellow guests wandering around looking relaxed and squeaky clean in their bathrobes and slippers, you'll learn to relax and sip herbal teas and you'll enjoy some tempting – and unusual – foods at both the buffet lunch and at dinner. At the latter you can enjoy a choice of vegetarian dishes, poultry or fish and wine is available.

The spa offers four packages in addition to its choice of daily treatments and standard stays: they fall under the headings "Relaxation", "Cure", "Shape Up" and "Rustic Country Stay." The first three are priced at \$650 pp for a three-night all-inclusive (meals and a variety of treatments) stay, while the Rustic Country package is priced from \$110 per night, including meals, a consultation and a variety of activities. I've been in spas before (very occasionally) where I've found the staff haughty and where I've felt rather intimidated and inexperienced.

But not here. It's a beautiful place with charming, bi-lingual staff; a very welcoming atmosphere and lots of couples. Plan a pampering getaway with your spouse or a friend, or at least let the others in your group go off and ski alone and go to be spoiled for an afternoon.

Of course visitors to the area do not have to travel around the region as I did. Each winter the Eastern Townships offer a variety of ski packages that include



Youngsters enjoy Québec City's Carnaval parades (Wallace)

lift tickets and accommodation. Last year Orford, Owl's Head and Sutton offered interchangeable lift tickets at very competitive rates compared with other ski areas, and Owl's Head (the most laid-back of the four resorts and just 15 minutes' drive from the Vermont border) also usually offers a cross-border ticket with Vermont's Jay Peak. Full details will be with your travel agent soon, or you can use the contacts listed here to plan your vacation.

As with all Québec destinations, there's a great deal of excellent information available on the Eastern Townships, both in brochure form and on the web. The area's slogan is "New England charm with Québec flair". How true. Loyalists fleeing the American Revolution settled the Eastern Townships in the late 18th century, and through the ensuing years this beautiful region has continued to offer hospitality to all who travel there. Many who fall in love with the region even plan to retire there ... don't be surprised if you find yourself jotting down real estate agents' numbers and dreaming of your little spot in the summer sun and the winter snow.

Call 1 800 355 5755 for information on the **Eastern Townships**, including a clear map, an *Official Tourist Guide* and details of ski packages available. Information also available at www.eastertownships.cc

Bromont: 1 866 BROMONT, www.skibromont.com

Mount Orford: 1 800 567 2772, www.mt-orford.com

Owl's Head: 1 800 363 3342, www.owlshead.com

Sutton: 450 538 2339, www.montsutton.com

Auberge West Brome: 1 888 902 7663, www.aubergewestbrome.ca Week-day winter prices from \$105 dbl. (with continental breakfast), from \$158 dbl. with dinner. Ski packages available.

Lakeview Inn: 1 800 661 6183, www.quebecweb.com/lakeview. Two night packages available for \$279 pp, including gourmet dinner and breakfast.

Ripplecove Inn: 1 800 668 4296, or www.ripplecove.com ... an excellent site with every room illustrated. The winter prices from \$275 per night are not as expensive as they might at first seem, for the rates, for two, include the four course gourmet dinner in the hotel's atmospheric dining room, full breakfast (both wonderful), use of all the inn's recreational facilities and discounts of between 5% and 25% on stays of two or more nights. Prices are even more attractive when split between a small group of six, who can be accommodated in the luxurious house called the

Birches or in the Appalachian Cottage for \$560. www.ripplecove.com

For **Spa Eastman** information call 1 800 665 5272 or visit www.spa-eastman.com.

After my sojourn in the Eastern Townships I drove on to Québec City for a convention, arriving in the middle of that city's Carnaval, a joyous celebration that is the world largest winter carnival. Daily business was dealt with as rapidly as possible so that the delegates could escape into the city to enjoy the parades, the ice sculptures, the sports and the wonderful scenery of this old walled city before watching the sun set over the Plains of Abraham and then finding a cozy bar and restaurant. This wasn't the first time I'd been a welcome participant at Carnaval; it was as much fun as ever. Gather up the children or grandchildren and plan a visit.

I stayed at the Hilton (see p. 18), but if you would like a smaller property in the Old Town a colleague recommended Hotel Acadia, on Rue Sainte-Ursule, where double rooms start at \$63 for a room with a shared bathroom, although there are ensuite de luxe rooms at higher prices. The property looks very attractive when viewed at www.maison-acadienne.com or call 1 800 463 0280 for a brochure.

The dates of next year's Carnaval are 31 January – 16 February. For more information and an official programme call 1 888 522 3383 or visit www.carnaval.qc.ca or www.quebecregion.com ☛

We have a file listing several single travellers who wish to take a Travel Society trip next year. Destinations include:

If you would like to share with another member please contact us. We will put you in touch with each other so that you can chat - or meet - and see if you would be compatible.

How about giving a subscription to TravelScoop as a gift this season? Call us and we can arrange it for you without delay.

The Beautiful Island of Kauai

by Barbara Bagnell

There are places we have travelled that we hope we'll return to, and there are places that, once seen and enjoyed, we feel we probably won't re-visit. The Hawaiian Island of Kauai is certainly one of the former – we spent an early November week there and wished it were a month. We stayed on the least-populated west shore, the area of Kauai with the driest, sunniest climate. We drove its quiet roads, hiked the valley of the Waimea Canyon, viewed beaches and dramatic cliffs from a boat, a helicopter and a sightseeing bus and hope to return for more. But, having done the sightseeing, we'll try to live like 'natives' the next time.

Arriving from Honolulu, we picked up our rental car about US\$200 for the week) at Lihue Airport and in 45 minutes arrived at our reserved cottage on the 27-acre Waimea Plantation about half a kilometre west of the sleepy town of Waimea. The airy cottage, once the home of a sugar plantation worker, had a fully-equipped kitchen (except for dishwasher), a screened porch, living room with phone and TV, full bathroom, and a king sized bed in the larger of two bedrooms.

All cottages are different depending on their use when the plantation housed workers and their families here in the early 1900's. All have been restored and modernized. We saw a one-bedroom cottage, which was very basic, but there's another which offers five bedrooms. No air-conditioning is needed with the Pacific breezes and ceiling fans. Prices in 2001 start-

ed at US\$175 a night; with a 25% reduction if you stay a week. Multi-bedroom cottages shared by several friends would make the price more reasonable: less than US\$600 per week per couple depending on cottage selected, during "value season": April to mid-June and Sept. 1 to Dec. 22. Tel: 808 338 1625, fax: 808 338 2338. The Plantation is managed by Aston Hotels, see www.aston-hotels.com.

We shopped at two good grocery stores in Waimea, just metres from a statue of Captain Cook who landed here in 1778. We found prices high since most foods are imported. Next time we'll look for more farmers' markets and live on local fruit and fish. There are one or two restaurants in Waimea, and one on the Plantation. We



One of the Waimea Plantation cottages (B. Bagnell)

dined out only once and spent about US\$60 for two on a main-course-plus-dessert meal with wine.

Morning began with the crowing of the island's plentiful wild roosters who sometimes came onto our verandah looking for a crumb. We left before daylight one morning and took "Captain Andy's Boat Tour" from a dock about 20-minutes drive away. From 7 a.m. until early afternoon we rode the waves in a large double-hulled boat capable of holding 120 passengers, (about \$100 including snorkelling gear and barbecue lunch. See www.capt-andys.com). We sailed past rusting sugar mills, patchwork fields where sugar cane (formerly 90% of the island's economy) lies fallow and will later be burned, past a naval base, and then

along the dramatic Na Pali Coast where steep green mountains slope to the pounding surf, here and there to a secluded beach. You can only reach these beaches by kayak or by a challenging 18-km hike over the mountains. Once there, though, you can pitch a tent and stay undisturbed. (There are 13 campgrounds on Kauai; camping is free at state parks, and about \$3 a night at county parks; permits required for both.)

Beautiful beaches abound in Kauai, but a word of warning – more people drown in Hawaii every year than anywhere in the U.S., so beware of strong undercurrents and use only beaches which locals assure you are safe. In 1964 Frank Sinatra disregarded that advice and was pulled from the powerful waves of Wailua Beach minutes before drowning. He was there for the shooting of *None But The Brave*. For many years Kauai has been used by movies requiring dramatic scenery. We spent a morning in a mini-van touring movie sites, many of which turned out to be yet another beautiful beach. Esther Williams paddled on Kauai's Wailua River in *Pagan Love Song* and Steven Spielberg chose Kauai's interior wilderness for his *Jurassic Park* dinosaurs. We visited the defunct Coco Palms Hotel, devastated by hurricane Iniki in 1992. Here Elvis Presley was seen in *Blue Hawaii*. His movie wedding took place on a picturesque bridge before he and his bride, actually an English actress made up to look Hawaiian, paddled away in a double canoe, still on the site. You, too, can have your wedding at the Coco Palms for US\$1,850. To find out about the movie tour see www.hawaiimovietour.com.

Our final and best sightseeing took place from a helicopter we boarded at Lihue airport. The pilot, only a few months away from flying in his native British Columbia, hovered over Mount Wai'ale'ale where the rainfall is the heaviest on earth (432 inches per year), skimmed over the walls of the dramatic red-lined Waimea Canyon, and dipped over the Na Pali

Mountains to the turquoise sea beyond. A one-hour flight costs US\$150 per person unless you use some of the many coupons found in a book, available everywhere, called *101 Things to do on Kauai*.

After our time on Waimea Plantation, we drove to Kilauea, where we briefly sampled a beautiful home built on its own 20-acre private lake. Owned by a Californian, Steve Hunt, the **Kilauea Estate House** has three large bedrooms and could well accommodate six adults and a couple of children. With that type of occupancy, its price of US \$495 a night or \$3,465 a week would work out to US\$165 a night per couple. (Owner Steve Hunt can be reached in California at 310

379 7842; e-mail shunt@aol.com or see

www.mmv.com/lakeside) The large open-plan home has every amenity: double jacuzzi tub, canoes, kayak, sandy beach. Its spacious open kitchen and nearby barbecue are well-suited to a self-catering group of family or friends. Stores can be found in the nearby town of Kilauea and from this north coast location, you'll find golf in Princeville, 10 miles of deserted beaches nearby, and, for the children, the home of 'Puff the Magic Dragon'. In the 1960's the trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, wrote the song here in Hanalei.

When we return to Kauai for a longer stay, we'll be looking for economy (and hoping for a better exchange rate than the present one!). We

made some notes while there and will check out some of the following:

Mindy's, 3 km west of Waimea in Kekeha, where there's a one-bedroom apartment with full kitchen for US\$60 a night double. Tel: 808 337 9275, www.virtualcities.com (click on Hawaii and follow the links) or e-mail Mindys@hgea.org. (Mindy's was recommended by a friend we made in Waimea.)

Garden Island Sunset Vacation Rentals - a 4-plex near Waimea; 2 bedroom, 1 bath from US\$550 weekly; tel. 1 800 367 5025



Bedroom in a Waimea Plantation cottage (B. Bagnell)

When winter's icy fingers wrap around our bones, an all-inclusive getaway to a sunny destination may be just what the doctor ordered. But which destination to choose? The big tour operators offer so many. TravelScoop member Martha Lasichuk has reported candidly on many such vacations for us in the past, and here's her latest package recommendation, along with details of some of the things you can see and do on ...

The Island of Cozumel, Mexico

by Martha V. Lasichuk

Cozumel is an island destination that provides a fabulous, sun-filled holiday. It is also rich in Mayan folklore and the Mayan ruins here are well worth a visit between the time you spend enjoying beaches, snorkelling, diving, duty-free shopping, and playing golf.

Cozumel Island is the largest island – 53 km long and 15 km wide – in Mexico. It became famous as one of the world's top diving destinations when, in the 1960's, explorer Jacques Cousteau revealed its abundant and accessible coral reefs.

Nineteen kilometres separates Cozumel from the Yucatan Peninsula, directly across from the area now known as "The Mayan Riviera" and frequent ferry service links the island to the mainland at Playa del Carmen. Only 3% of Cozumel is developed; the remainder is densely forested and populated by tropical birds, lizards, coati, deer and other wildlife. National Parks occupy much of the shore and the off-shore reefs are also protected. The water is calm, ideal for snorkelling or scuba diving at one of the many reefs just off the coast. The climate is typical of the Caribbean with an average annual temperature at 27°C.

One paved and well-maintained highway with a few side-roads makes this a good island to rent a vehicle for exploring. The eastern side of the island is undeveloped, windy and scattered with expanses of surfing-type beaches serviced by a few bars and craft shops. The west side faces the mainland and is where development is concentrated. The main town is San Miguel and since it is a cruise ship stop, the downtown harbour area is full of duty-free shops, jewellery stores, restaurants, craft shops, etc. Enquire at your hotel which day is least visited by cruise ships if you want to avoid the crowds. Be prepared to bargain everywhere and for everything on this island.

'Fun in the sun destinations' do not need detailed

descriptions, but if you do travel to Cozumel don't miss a visit to the San Gervasio Mayan ruins.

According to the Mayan legend Cozumel was a sacred island; the home of the goddess Ixchel, the "She of the Rainbow" devoted to love, fertility, midwifery, childbirth, medicine, weaving and the moon. Pilgrimages from all over Mesoamerica came to honour her. Religious temples were dedicated to her and every Maya woman was expected once in her lifetime to make a pilgrimage. And they did, leaving the mainland and coming to the island by large dugout canoes. San Gervasio was once the island's capital and the ceremonial centre with small temples and shrines, and the Temple of Ix Chel. The structures are well preserved and some have been reconstructed. Situated in a dense forest, these remarkable ruins are the largest existing Maya and Toltec site in Cozumel.

Archaeological and restoration work conducted by the National Institute of Anthropology and History occurring since the 1970's has determined that the site was founded around 300 A.D. It was still a functioning religious site at the time the Spaniards arrived.

The site consists of several architectural collections linked by sacbés, or white paths. These uneven and stony paths through the woods require walking shoes, and since many buildings can be scaled it is wise to wear longer shorts or pants.

Each of the ruins is clearly identified and explained with plaques written in English, Spanish and Maya. They are also placed in context with individual maps. Nohoch Nah (or "Big House") is a temple, built upon a small base with two access stairways. Within some mural painting fragments can still be seen. Another building named Murciélagos (Bats) is an irregular base with five buildings in its upper portion. It has a preserved water well, probably built around 700 A.D. Another building known as Ka'na Nah ("Tall

House”) has a temple with two small rooms preserved.

The ruins are located in a beautiful, natural setting, just 7 km east of San Miguel, accessible by a good road off the cross-island highway. (Beware the confusing road map in the 1999 Ulysses guide *Cancun and The Riviera Maya* which doesn't distinguish between the island's secondary roads and highways.) The road to the site is well marked and the site is open daily from 8:00 – 5:00. Free parking is provided (a tip is appreciated by the affable greeters on site) and conveniences at the site include restrooms, a snack bar and handicraft shops. (By the way, the prices you can negotiate here are very reasonable; even better than in town.) Organized guided visits and cab service is offered from

the city's main hotels. We paid approximately US\$5 entrance fees and priced multi-lingual guides available for group tours at about \$5 US per person. While no written material is handed out with the entrance fee, signs at the buildings are

multi-lingual so the site can be enjoyed at your own pace. Try to go on a day when not too many cruise ships are in port – it is one of their excursion offerings and with so many busloads, they can make the site busy and somewhat crowded.

We booked our one-week Cozumel trip in mid-January 2002 with the Wholesale Travel Group (416 366 1000, www.wholesaletravel.com) about 10 days before our departure on 27 January at a cost of \$1,320 per person, taxes included. It was a Sunquest Vacations package at the all-inclusive Sol Melia Paradisus Hotel which, we discovered, has the best beach in the area (superior to next door El Cozumeleno's), good food and facilities, and nicely furnished large rooms. Larger junior suites are also available as an upgrade. The hotel was in the process of upgrading the public areas. The Paradisus is a founding partner of the Cozumel Country Club (Nicklaus Design Group) championship golf course across the street, so it offers golf packages. We were too busy sight-seeing to golf, but we heard nothing but



The ruins of San Gervasio, Cozumel (Lasichuk)

praise for the condition and challenges of the course from several golfers we spoke with. This season's details can be found through your travel agent, or log onto www.sunquest.ca. The quoted price is now '7 nights from C\$1,599'.

The early flight from Toronto put us on the island in under four hours, so there was inevitably a wait for the rooms to be ready. But we were prepared and had packed our carry-on bags accordingly so that we could head straight to the beach to relax and enjoy the ample sunshine as well as many shady areas. Another tip: purchase any liquor you require before your departure, since stock at the Cozumel airport duty-free shop is limited (for example, there was no Kalhua available).

The airport is modern and has a gift shop where everything but t-shirts are reasonably priced compared to town and other outlets.

We were travelling with another couple so rented a 4-door Nissan which we located and confirmed through

the internet (see www.islacozumel.net/services/smartcar/, e-mail: carsmart@cozumel.com.mx). Smart-Rent-a-Car picked us up at the hotel and took us to their office for the ensuing paperwork. They offered a 50% off three-day rental special, so we took the car for four days which averaged under US\$40 a day, using our Gold Visa for CDW. Rates for the car rental at the hotel were more expensive. Jeep-type vehicles are recommended if you intend to visit other outlying ruins – some are located on roads that are only accessible by 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Along with sightseeing, members of our party tried deep-sea fishing (full day \$120), a snorkel trip (1/2 day \$45; full day \$65) and scuba dives (two dives \$99 + extra \$30 for optional underwater photos). All tours were arranged with the Sunquest agent on site at the hotel. Costs of these activities are per person in US dollars. ■

Martha Lasichuk is a TravelScoop subscriber who lives in Bolton, ON

Travel Digest

Bermuda

If you like to look forward to some entertainment at the end of your days in the sun, the 28th Annual Bermuda Festival is sure to fit the bill. From 13 January to 1 March visitors can enjoy nearly 40 performances by world-renowned artists in classical music, dance, jazz, drama and popular entertainment. For details visit www.bermudafestival.com And for a selection of vacation options on this beautiful island, including the

Compliments of Bermuda Fall-Into-Spring special savings promotion, call 1 800 BERMUDA or visit www.bermudatourism.com Canadian travellers can enjoy packages offered in this promotion from C\$799, together with a US\$100 credit per booking that can be used as cash at participating stores and attractions. Visitors will also receive the *Passbook to Savings* coupon booklet for additional savings at shops, restaurants, attractions and golf courses.

Britain

If exploring Britain is in your plans this winter you may like to take advantage of BritRail's Off-Peak Winter Promo – 25% off all BritRail Classic and FlexiPasses. An example: travel in Britain on any 4 days within 2 months for C\$242. And don't forget to check out the London Pass, which includes admission to a wide selection of attractions and galleries. All details on www.britrail.net (including Gatwick and Heathrow transportation) or call 1 877 677 1066

or see your agent.

They may at first look expensive, but break the price down to a 'per person' rate and you'll realize how affordable they can be for a group. We're talking about renting a Scottish castle for a family or, perhaps, a group of friends (containing some golfers, maybe?). The best way to view these properties is online at www.scottscastles.com (click on 'self-catering rentals') which has links through to other accommodation options in Scotland via www.aboutscotland.com

Shakespeare, English literature, medieval studies, history, art history or science anyone? These are the subjects on the agenda for the University of Cambridge's International Programmes to be held in Cambridge, England, next July and August. For full details write to International Programmes, Madingley Hall, Madingley, Cambridge CB3 8AQ, England, tel: 011 44 1954 280398, fax: 011 44 1954 280200, e-mail: intenq@cont-ed.cam.ac.uk, www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/IntSummer Full details should be on the web by the time you read this.

Canada

If you love eagles you'll be interested in an Eagle Safari: a raft trip down a glacier river near Brackendale, just 45 minutes from Vancouver on the way to Whistler Resort, to witness the largest migration of Bald Eagles in the world. The trips are available until 28 February and details can be found by calling 1 800 713 7238 or visiting www.elahoadventures.com

Holland

The year 2003 is an important one for Amsterdam and art lovers as the 150th birthday of Vincent Van Gogh is celebrated with three exhibitions. These cover not only Van Gogh's work but also the artists whom he admired and those whose work he, in turn, influenced. Two of the exhibitions will be staged in the Van Gogh Museum; *Vincent's Choice* will run from 14 February until 15 June, with *Gogh Modern* following from 27 June to 12 October. It would be possible to see them both by planning two stays in Amsterdam during June with, perhaps, some travels in Holland in between. (A cruise perhaps? See Cruise News, p.17 for some ideas.) In addition, in Otterlo, about 100 km from Amsterdam, the Kröller-Müller Museum will be presenting *Vincent and Helene: the Significance of Van Gogh in the Kröller-Müller Collection* from 14 February – 12 October. This museum is home to the world's second largest Van Gogh collection and the exhibition will focus on the passion of the museum's founder – Helene Kröller-Müller – for the work of Van Gogh and explore the reasons that compelled her to acquire so many of his works. Visitors wishing to visit two museums in one day can take a special Van Gogh shuttle bus between Amsterdam and Otterlo. For excellent tourist information on Holland call 1 800 GO HOLLAND, e-mail your request to info@goholland or visit www.holland.com

Italy

The 2003 edition of that lovely brochure from La Bella Toscana (villas for rent in the San

Gimignano and Colle di Val d'Elsa regions that so many *TravelScoop* readers have enjoyed) is now available from Gaynor Powell. For your copy write to Gaynor at Via solferino 28, 53034 Colle Val d'Elsa (SI), Italy, fax: 011 39 577 999 023, e-mail: info@labellatoscana.it, www.labellatoscana.net

Spain

The government-operated *paradores* of Spain are a popular accommodation choice amongst *TravelScoop* readers, so many of you will be pleased to know the network of these properties is being expanded and are now all listed at www.parador.es Winter prices are the year's lowest, and seniors 60+ enjoy a 35% discount at these properties. And the Spain Tourist Authorities have launched a comprehensive new website at www.spain.info that potential visitors to Spain should find exceptionally useful.

U.S.A.

While our governments thrash out border-crossing details, the tourism officials in a variety of states continue to try to lure Canadians their way. If a winter getaway to **Chicago** sounds appealing, take advantage of the special *Chicaglo* hotel rates being offered through the holiday season until 1 January 2003. Prices range from US\$69 for the Essex Inn, to US\$295 for the luxurious Peninsula Chicago Hotel. For details call 1 877 CHICAGO or visit www.877CHICAGO.com Travellers who reserve accommodation through this number or website will receive a voucher for

the *Guidebook of Special Values* and there are many free musical performances throughout the festive season.

There's lots to see and do in historic **Pennsylvania** and the state is welcoming Canadians with a *Drive Pennsylvania* guide which divides the state into six itineraries and includes accommodation specials for each route. There's also a list of Canadian tour operators that offer getaways to the state. For a copy of the guide, together with a *Travel Planner* and map, call 1 800 VISIT PA, ext. 325 or visit www.ExperiencePA.com

Washington State has lots of specials for Canadians too: 50% off lodging rates in Bellingham (1 888 261 7795 or www.bellingham.org), a similar offer in Seattle (206 461 5882 or www.seattlesupersaver.com), an "at par" programme in Snohomish County (1 888 557 2889 or www.RoomsatPar.com), buy-one-get-one-free from Amtrak on any Amtrak Cascades route between Vancouver and Eugene, Oregon (1 800 USA RAIL or www.amtrakcascades.com) and "at-par" rates at Camano Island Waterfront Inn, Puget Sound (1 888 718 0783 or www.camanoislandinn.com) Many of these specials extend into the spring.

In **Florida** a total of 50 Orlando and Kissimmee-St. Cloud hotels, attractions and golf course are offering "at par" deals as part of a joint marketing campaign designed specifically for Canadians. Additional discount coupons are also available. For details and to order a Vacation Planning Kit, call 1 800 646 2079 or visit www.orlandokissimmee.com/Canada The "at par" rates run to 31 March 2003.

Cruise News

Windjammer Barefoot Cruises is offering Canadians "dollars at par" rates for all of its January sailings. The offer is limited and applicable on cruise fares only. Windjammer's six- and 13-day cruises not only include such usual cruise offerings as all meals and entertainment, but also drinks such as early morning Bloody Marys, Caribbean rum cocktails and wine with dinner. Windjammer's fleet includes five sailing vessels and one freighter/passenger vessel. For further details see your agent, call 1 305 672-6453 or visit www.windjammer.com

American Canadian Caribbean Cruise Line – which the company describes as "the small ship line which is popular with the senior market" – is offering a choice of 11-night itineraries on its winter Caribbean cruises at a 15% discount. These ships, with 100 passenger maximum capacities, have shallow drafts to enable them to land on uncrowded beaches and to cruise shallow water inaccessible to larger cruise ships. Winter destinations include the Virgin Islands, the Bahamas, Belize, Guatemala and Panama. For a complete brochure call 1 800 556 7450 or visit www.accl-smallships.com

Those of you who enjoyed the *TravelScoop* article "By Boat Through Holland" in our January 2002 edition may like to know that the boat company – Vancouver-based Pavlik Travel Group – now has the product line-up for 2003 ready. Full details of *Boating & Barging Holidays in Europe* can be obtained by calling Pavlik at 1 800 665 9501, www.pavliktravelgroup.com e-mail: info@pavliktravelgroup.com. Not only does Pavlik offer self-skippered cruises as detailed in the *TravelScoop* article, it also features full-service, all-inclusive cruises for those who don't choose to drive the boats themselves. They also offer combined bike and boat vacations, gastronomic and wine cruises. Countries covered include Austria, England, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Russia and Scotland.

Hotel Happenings

Here's news of an innovative offer to Canadians travellers from the Hilton group of hotels. It appears giving yourself a treat at a participating Hilton Hotel will bring you some very attractive rewards. At more than 520 Hilton, Conrad, Doubletree and Hilton Garden Inn hotels guests will be rewarded at check-in with coupons to assist with future travel plans.

Travellers who book just one qualifying Easy Escapes hotel stay will receive a **Travel Values Booklet** filled with budget-stretching offers for future airline travel, car rental and hotel stays that can be

used through July 2004. And each offer in the Booklet is transferable to family or friends, so no portion of the offer need go unused.

The Booklet includes a *Fly Anywhere*

For US\$299 certificate which includes travel between 15 major cities within Canada, 22 major cities within Mexico and between 99 cities within the continental U.S. Another certificate offers affordable fares to Hawaii from major cities across the U.S. – US\$449 roundtrip for travel originating west of the Mississippi, US\$599 for travel from east of the Mississippi. (Note: both these flight offers require a US\$9.95 registration and handling fee.)

Additional offers include a US\$50 flight credit that can be applied to a flight of US\$250 or more on any airline to any destination; 5 – 20% savings on weekend Avis rental cars globally, plus US\$5 off

each day on a minimum two-day weekend rental; a US\$100 food and beverage credit for future Hilton stays of 4 or more nights and a 'Sunday is Free' coupon for guests who arrive at a participating Hilton-group hotel on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday and stay three consecutive nights.

Easy Escapes packages are offered on a per room, per stay basis. More information at www.HiltonEasyEscapes.com, by calling 1 800 HILTONS or through your travel agent. The package is available at participating Hilton-group hotels across North American, the Caribbean and other

international destinations, while the 18 Hilton properties across Canada are located in Vancouver, Calgary, Windsor, London, Niagara Falls, Hull, Montréal, Québec City and Saint John. Enjoy a getaway treat soon



The winter view from the Hilton Hotel over historic Québec City (Wallace)

and perhaps you will be able to reap the benefits in the future.

Here at *TravelScoop* we would be interested to hear how these offers work out for our readers.

(As mentioned on p. 11 of this edition, I stayed in the Québec City Hilton during a tourism conference in February of this year and enjoyed my visit very much, especially the spectacular view across the Old Town and out across the frozen St. Lawrence. Here's a photo I took from my window!)

by Ann Wallace

Airline News

Air Canada has increased its service to **Spain**. Since 14 November the carrier has offered flights to **Bilbao, Valencia, Alicante, Tenerife** and **Las Palmas** on a codeshare basis via **Madrid** with **Spanair**. Air Canada inaugurated non-stop service between Toronto and Madrid on April 7, offering connections with Spanair to **Barcelona, Malaga** and **Palma de Mallorca**, as well as flights to **Lisbon, Portugal**.

A new **Air Canada** route, in time for winter getaways to the Caribbean, will be the direct flight to **Grenada** commencing 23 December. For information on Grenada contact their Board of Tourism at 416 595 1339 or visit www.grenadagrenadines.com/canada or ask your travel agent for an *Air Canada Vacations* brochure.

With an ever-expanding fleet, **Westjet** will add flights from **Hamilton, Ontario**, to **Halifax** to its network on 28 February with connecting service to many WestJet destinations. Four flights daily are planned, with one-way fares starting as low as \$124. Also, in March, WestJet will increase frequency **Hamilton/Ottawa, Hamilton/Calgary** and **Hamilton/Moncton**.

Las Vegas is more than glitz and gambling. It's also the gateway to some unusual vacations in **Nevada**, and **Tango** will be offering a daily, low-fare service from Toronto to Las Vegas commencing 26 December with one-way prices from \$204. Tickets from www.flytango.com, 1 800 315 1390 or through your travel agent (there's a \$2.50 reduction for website bookings). And for a copy of the handsome *Nevada Travel Planner 2003* (lots of ideas, from skiing to driving itineraries in Death Valley and Grand Canyon National Parks) call 1 800 NEVADA-8.

Good news for Ontario skiers who are thinking of a eastern ski trip this winter: Toronto-based Ultimate Ski Vacations is offering winter flights from Toronto directly to the **Québec** ski resort of **Mont Tremblant**. Flights will be available from 19 December to 27 March 2003 and depart Thursdays and Sundays from Pearson International Airport. Ski packages include air travel with **Air Canada Jazz**, accommodations, transfers and lift tickets. For further details, call 905 755 0999.

Jetsgo is doubling its fleet and is, or will be, expanding its discount service with new routes and/or additional service to destinations such as **Timmins, ON., Saguenay, PQ., Charlottetown, PEI., Winnipeg, Vancouver, Montreal, New York** and **Fort Lauderdale, FL**.

Cathay Pacific's All Asia Pass is now on sale for

2003. Priced from C\$1,899 plus taxes this pass can take travellers from Vancouver or Toronto to **Hong Kong, Bangkok, Cebu, Fukuoka, Jakarta, Karachi, Osaka, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Bali, Nagoya, Penang, Sapporo, Seoul, Singapore, Surabaya, Taipei** and **Tokyo**. And if you're 55 or better the price drops to C\$1,699, while CP's CyberTraveler member can purchase the pass for C\$1,499 and take along up to three friends for the same price. To join the programme visit www.cathay.ca. Pass departures may occur from 9 February – 15 May and from 14 August – 4 December inclusive, transpacific departures must occur Sunday through Thursday and travel must be completed within 21 days of arrival in Asia, although extension options up to 90 days are available for an additional fee. This pass must be booked through a travel agent, but information can be obtained by calling 1 800 607 3388 and requesting document 5101 or by visiting the above website.

As a follow up to all the Turkish information that has been appearing in *TravelScoop* recently, we thought we should remind readers that **Turkish Airlines** offers direct flights to **Istanbul** from **New York** and **Chicago**. If both airports are of equal convenience for you, Chicago is the better choice, because in New York you have to get from La Guardia to JFK. (*And if you ever do have to make this airport switch, take a taxi and not the shuttle bus. The latter usually takes ages as it serves all the many terminals and, for two people, is not much cheaper than a taxi anyway - Ed.*) If you do use this route to Turkey, enquire of your travel agent about the 'Visit Turkey Airfare' whereby you can fly economically to a number of cities within Turkey based upon the number of flight segments you need.

Fliers to **Britain** be aware! Security guards and fire-fighters at major British airports – members of the Transport and General Workers Union – are planning a series of one-day strikes. Heathrow is one of the airports that will be affected if these strikes go ahead. December and January dates for these walkouts are 2, 10, 15 and 23 December and 2 January.

Do you collect **Aeroplan** points? If so, **Radisson Hotels & Resorts** is offering between 500 bonus miles (for one stay) and 5,000 miles (for five stays) in addition to the 1,000 Radisson Gold Points per night (which can, in turn, be converted into airline miles). The offer is in place now and extends until 31 March 2003. Aeroplan members must register for this promotion on-line at www.bonusmiles.radisson.com and for reservations at www.radissoncanada.com or by calling 1 800 333 3333.

continued from page 13 *The Beautiful Island of Kauai*

Coral By the Sea B&B, tel: 808 337 1084, e-mail coralsea@hawaiian.net www.hawaiian.net/~coralsea. Studio apartment for \$357.50 a week.

Marjorie's Kauai Inn, tel. 808 332 8838 or www.marjorieskauaiInn.com which advertises prices of US\$83 to \$96 per night for large rooms with great views and mini-kitchens.

Kekaha Sunset Beach Rental, tel: 808 337 1054, e-mail kekahasunset@hotmail.com which has a 3-bedroom house (US\$175 a night when used by 6 persons as well as a studio apartment for \$85 per night double occupancy). Both are equipped with kitchenette. Discounts for stays of 6 days or longer.

And a house called **Moloa'a Kai** is for rent south of Kilauea. It has two bedrooms and two baths and rents for US\$985 a week for up to four people. Tel: 808 247 3637, fax 808 235 2644, e-mail hibeach@lava.net. For information on Kauai, call 1 800 262 1400 or visit www.kauaivisitorsbureau.org.

Air Canada has non-stop flights to Honolulu from Toronto, and flies from other cities with a stop in Vancouver. We had accumulated enough Aeroplan

points for two executive class seats, but the "availability" for Aeroplan members we hoped to get at the gate on the 9½ hour flight to Honolulu didn't materialize. Returning home, we luxuriated in executive class from Honolulu to Vancouver and sat in an inadequate "executive class" with no footrests on its seats from Vancouver to Toronto.

Arriving in Honolulu at night, we stayed in that city long enough to visit Pearl Harbor, an impressive memorial to a past disaster, and to see some of Waikiki Beach's sites. We treated ourselves to a stay at the **Sheraton Moana Surfrider Hotel**, the beach's first hotel, celebrating its 100th birthday this year. Built for \$150,000 its rooms on opening cost \$1.50 per night. They now cost about \$239. Its second floor Historic Room displays stories from its past, including old scripts from the radio show, *Hawaii Calls*, which was broadcast from there from 1935 to 1975. www.sheraton-hawaii.com. 📧

Barbara Bagnell is a travel writer who lives in Toronto, ON

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(Note: due to a computer error, two editions in 2002 were labelled 'September'. Your pink edition, with Turkey on the cover, should be changed to read 'October'.)

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

NEW
from \$4,950
for 21 days
including all airfares

A Traveller's Turkey

Departing 5 October 2003

Space limited to 20 people

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here there are fabled cities, unique landscapes, incomparable historic sites and calm, friendly people who are eager to show that their land is, indeed, both historic and modern.

Ann Wallace, our editor, has travelled extensively in Turkey and always returns claiming it is one of her favourite destinations. So now we have organized a luxurious tour exclusively for Travel Society members. It is due to take place in October 2003 for a maximum of 20 people.

No expense has been spared to ensure you see the very best that Turkey has to offer. You'll stay in first-class historic or very specialized hotels, travel in a 40-seat air-conditioned luxury bus, enjoy cruises on private boats, sample fine food and be entertained by cultural performances. And the itinerary? Magical Istanbul (plenty of time there); Ankara, home of one of the world's finest museums; the unique 'geological poem' called Kapadokya (or Cappadocia); mysterious and lovely ruins such as Aphrodisias, Pergamum and, of course, Ephesus; the fabled and beautiful Aegean coast; the peaceful Princes Isles in the Sea of Marmara and so much more.

Ann says, "This is the most perfect tour of Turkey imaginable; you will have an unforgettable time ... and such a small group, too! Sign up now!"

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton & Calgary	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$5,125.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.) **Taxes included, visa extra.**

In order to prepare participants for their visit to this historic land, an annotated reading list will be sent to all applicants and comprehensive tour kits will be sent 30 days before departure.

Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic and domestic flights with Air Canada
- 20 nights' accommodation
- Most meals as per itinerary
- All domestic transportation
- 40 seat air conditioned luxury bus
- Admission to all sites
- An English-speaking guide/director and a Travel Society host

NEW

Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

with options to Kapawi Lodge in the Amazon and Machu Picchu, Peru

Each tour is limited to 20 people

14 days departing 18 February, 18 March, 22 April 14 October & 4 November 2003

The Travel Society is proud to be able to offer its members an outstanding trip to some of the world's most spectacular destinations. Who hasn't dreamed of cruising to the Galapagos Islands and seeing wildlife as Darwin witnessed it? Think of the unique adventure you will enjoy, of the stories you will have to tell and the photographs you will take! You will spend a week aboard your first-class 20-passenger ship, taking daily shore excursions to a variety of the islands with experienced naturalists in groups of no more than 10 people per guide.

But of course there's more to Ecuador than the Galapagos. On this tour you will also visit Quito, Calderon (where you'll stay in one of the oldest haciendas in Ecuador) and Cotacachi. You'll travel through spectacular countryside with mountains, lakes and colourful Indian communities ... whose markets you will visit.

The optional extensions to this trip are equally exciting. Spend four nights in the Amazon's premier luxury ecological lodge - the magical paradise know as Kapawi - and experience the river and the rainforest up close. Machu Picchu in Peru is probably also on your wish list and we are offering a 4-day trip there too. You can travel from Quito to Lima and then on to Cuzco for a visit to this breathtaking Lost City of the Incas. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is marvel and enjoy!

PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$7,476.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$7,476.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$7,797.00 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$7,797.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$7,394.00 pp/dbl

GREAT ADD-ONS INCLUDING AIR:

Kapawi - from all departure points	\$1,680.00 pp/dbl
Machu Picchu -	
: Toronto	\$1,642.00 pp/dbl
When departing from	
: Ottawa, Montreal	\$1,642.00 pp/dbl
: Vancouver, Calgary	\$1,547.00 pp/dbl
: Halifax	\$1,694.00 pp/dbl

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip air transportation
- All domestic air transportation
- All accommodation
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Admissions to all sites
- Expert Galapagos guides
- Transfers & baggage handling
- Islands Park Entrance Fee (US100)

Please call **The Travel Society** 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for *Travel Society* members and are only available at these prices through our office. **TICO** reg #01280649

NEW

Copper Canyon & Guadalajara

9 days 14 March & 11 April 2003

We are offering a new 9-day tour to the Copper Canyon, together with a stay in Mexico's wonderful city of Guadalajara. The Copper Canyon is four times larger than the Grand Canyon, and you'll enjoy a journey that is considered by many to be the world's most exciting train trip, with its 87 tunnels, 39 bridges and uncountable spectacular views. You'll meet the people, stay in unique accommodations and explore the present and the past in this astonishing region.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,245 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,245 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg	\$3,460 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$600 (Sharing can be arranged.)	Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- All air transportation on Mexicana
- Canadian domestic air
- 8 nights first class accommodation
- All transfers,
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All train trips and tours as per the itinerary

NEW

Chile with add-ons to Easter Island and Patagonia

Please call for the details on this most fascinating tour; with great add-ons, and we will send you all the details.

NEW

Panama Highlights ~ see this beautiful land before it is over-run by "tourists"

Departing 21 March & 11 April 2003

Imagine discovering colourful Panama during the coming November or February. Come with The Travel Society for 10 exciting days in four different locations. You'll stay at Fort Amador, famous for its views of the Pacific and the entrance to the Panama Canal. Then you'll travel on to a luxurious rainforest resort – the Gamboa – close to the Canal in the heart of the lush Panamanian rainforest. There you'll discover the secrets of the upper forest canopy – its flowers, mammals and splendid birds – on a unique aerial tram ride. A flight to the San Blas Islands is next on the itinerary, described in the October 2000 edition of TravelScoop as "A paradise ... truly special and beautiful." A stay in a resort on the Costa Blanca and a chance of explore Panama City will bring your trip to a close. What an unusual winter getaway!

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,480 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$3,480 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$3,564 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$3,564 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$3,580 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$1,620.0 (Sharing can be arranged.)	Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international airfares
- Canadian domestic air
- 9 nights' accommodation in 4 different properties
- all land transfers
- flights to San Blas
- all breakfasts
- 4 lunches
- 4 dinners
- rainforest aerial tram tour

NEW

Costa Rica – "Nature's Museum"

11 days departing 7 February 2003

Costa Rica is known as Nature's Museum and with good reason. Come for a visit and you'll be impressed by this country that is dedicated to preserving its delicate ecology for all to enjoy and by its warm friendly people who are waiting to show it to you. During your 10-day tour you'll visit historic San Jose, stay in a tropical rain forest at a thermal spa resort; visit a vast jungle preserve; take a river boat trip to watch and photograph the wildlife; soak in the thermal pools of Arenal Paraiso and visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. And after all this you'll relax or play on the beach at Guanacaste Also available is a 3-night jungle odyssey post tour extension, an exciting soft-adventure to Tortuguero, the Amazon of Costa Rica.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Toronto	\$2,920 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$2,920 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$2,990 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$2,990 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$3,036 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$464 (Sharing can be arranged.)	Taxes extra.

Please call for prices from other departure cities

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international airfares
- Canadian domestic air
- 9 nights' accommodation in 4 different properties
- all land transfers
- flights to San Blas
- all breakfasts
- 4 lunches
- 4 dinners
- rainforest aerial tram tour

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

from \$3,924 for 18 days

Our editor, Ann Wallace took the April 2002 China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated (and honest) account is available. For your copy please send \$5 with your address.

China ... Yangtze Spectacular ~ 18 days!

Come with us on our most popular, unique tour and spend 18 days in China still at an amazingly low price. Reserve now for departures on **12 April, 27 April, 9 September & 19 October 2003**

It is vast, fascinating and mysterious and it has beckoned travellers from the west for centuries. Mention it to avid travellers and they are sure to say, "Yes, I hope to visit China one day." And what would they choose to experience? **A cruise on the mighty Yangtze River (soon to be changed for ever);** a look at the work-in-progress on the massive **Three Gorges Dam;** a walk on the ancient **Great Wall;** views of charming villages, lush terraced hillsides and magnificent mountain peaks; visits to the great cities of **Shanghai** and **Beijing;** a trip to view one of the world's greatest archaeological finds ... the 6,000 terra-cotta warriors at **Xi'an;** scenes of palaces, pagodas, pavilions and pandas; tastes of Peking duck and Chinese banquets and so much more. So how do you choose? When you decide on The Travel Society's tour there's no need to choose because all these highlights are included. Yes, in these remarkable 18 days you'll stay in Beijing; you'll take a 4-day first-class cruise on the Yangtze with many shore excursions; you'll fly to see those centuries-old terra-cotta warriors in Xi'an; you'll visit bustling Chongquin and see its pandas; stay in Hangzhou and travel into the hills covered with tea plantations; explore the exquisite gardens of Suzhou, and visit Nanjing and Wuzhen. And you'll have time to explore spectacular Shanghai. Throughout the trip you'll see magnificent architecture, you'll be entertained at cultural events, you'll join your hosts at a variety of banquets, you'll have time to shop, and you'll marvel at some of the most wonderful scenery on earth, all in the company of English-speaking guides. You'll travel by plane, by luxury bus, cruise ship and river boat. Many of our members have told us it's an experience of a lifetime ... and all at an amazing price!

**\$100.00
EARLY BIRD
BOOKING BONUS!**

Make your reservation with deposit 8 months prior to your departure date and we will deduct \$100 per couple.

Your tour costs includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on Japan Airlines
- Chinese domestic airfares
- Canadian domestic airfares
- First-class hotel accommodation
- First-class 4 days/3 nights Yangtze River cruise aboard a deluxe cruise ship
- All transfers
- Daily sightseeing
- Three meals daily
- 2 Western style dinners.
- Special banquets in Hangzhou, Xi'an and Beijing
- Evening cultural shows
- Fully escorted by English/Chinese-speaking tour guide
- English-speaking local guides
- Free day and evening in Beijing & Shanghai

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Vancouver	\$3,986 pp/dbl
Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops	\$4,099 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,224 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,428 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,392 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,320 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,426 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec City/London	\$4,540 pp/dbl
Thunder Bay/St. John's	\$4,688 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,090 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Taxes and visas extra.

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Hong Kong	4 days/3 nights	\$1,094.00
Tokyo	4 days/3 nights	\$892.00

Prices are subject to confirmation

So many members have said:
"We don't know how you do such a first class tour at this price!"

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

The Travel Society ~ tours designed for TravelScoop members and their friends.

The Kingdom of Thailand

with optional Angkor Wat (Cambodia) pre-tour and Pattaya post-tour extensions

17 days departing April & October 2003

"Thailand is magical." So say the increasing number of travellers who journey to this exotic land, a land of majestic palaces, ornate temples, quaint cities, beautiful landscapes and charming, gentle people. Come with The Travel Society and over 14 memorable days we'll show you bustling Bangkok, the floating market and legendary canals of Damnoen Saduak, the Bridge on the River Kwai at Kanchanaburi, Ayutthaya – Thailand's ancient capital, the cool hills and forests of Chiang Mai with their Hill Tribes and working elephants and so much more. You'll shop for unique items, enjoy a Thai cooking class, witness cultural shows, take river trips, visit museums AND still have plenty of time at leisure to follow your own interests.

However, before your arrival in Thailand, you may like to enjoy a unique experience in Cambodia where you'll visit fascinating Angkor Wat. You'll view the Wats and Terraces at sunset and spend a day among the fascinating temple structures that formed the former capital and religious centre of the Khmer Empire.

And an optional post-tour will take you to relax at Pattaya – known as the Riviera of Thailand, where you can enjoy exquisite tropical gardens, a visit to the Mini Siam miniature display of Thai heritage and a catamaran cruise as well as the inviting beach. This trip is scheduled for Spring and Fall, 2003. Give us a call ... we'll add you to the list of those interested and send a full itinerary and applicable prices.

PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg & Montreal	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Vancouver & Calgary	\$3,045.00 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$3,100.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$3,560.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$4,095.00 pp/dbl

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Angkor Wat	\$919.00 pp/dbl - plus air
Pattaya	\$839.00 pp/dbl - plus air

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip transpacific and domestic air
- All domestic flights
- Canadian domestic air fares
- Fully escorted by knowledgeable tour guides
- All transfers
- All sightseeing tours, boat trips and fees to parks & sites

Please call The Travel Society 1 877 926 2500 x24 or 416 926 2500 x24 for the full details. All our tours are specially priced for Travel Society members and are only available at these prices through our office.  reg #01280649

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or START A NEW MEMBERSHIP _____
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 (a 21% saving off the regular \$140.00)
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 (a 16% saving off the regular \$95.00)
 ____ **1 year** for **\$44.00** - the member rate
 (a 10% saving off the regular \$49.00)

All prices include GST.
 ____ my cheque is enclosed, or charge my:
 ____ VISA ____ Mastercard ____ AmEx
 card #: _____
 expiry: _____ tel: _____
 signature: _____

I agree to pay TravelScoop the above amount in accordance with the card issuer agreement.

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