

# Travel Scoop

The Newsmagazine  
for Members of  
The Travel Society

Vol. 21, No. 5 June 2003

## Sri Lanka ... the Land of Many Names

by Ann Wallace

Serendipity. I think it's one of the most beautiful words in our language. And its etymology is fascinating. It was coined by the 18<sup>th</sup>-century English novelist and essayist Horace Walpole when he rescued from literary oblivion the fairy tale called *The Three Princes of Serendib*. But Serendip (or Serendib) was no fairy-tale land. It was just one of the names ascribed, over the years, to that magical island that seems to hang, like a teardrop, off the subcontinent of India. The three princes of the fairy tale possessed "the gift of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident" and that is the meaning Walpole had in mind when he created for us the delightful word



A group of students at the Gal Vihara rock sculptures (Wallace)

"serendipity". And discovering the island that today is known as Sri Lanka is, indeed, serendipitous.

Through the ages, Sri Lanka has had a string of other identities, most of which refer to the island's great natural beauty. A 16<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese sea captain tried to persuade his countrymen to refer to the island by an ancient Indian word which meant "land of

... continued on page 6

Sri Lanka	1	Counting Diamonds	15
Winning Scoop - Porto, Portugal	3	Travel Digest	17
The Day of the Dead in Mexico	12	Cruise News	19
Rugby, Tennessee	14	The Travel Society	21

# TravelScoop

The Newsmagazine for Members of  
The Travel Society

## Editor

Ann Wallace  
ann@thetravelsociety.com

## Contributors

John and Doreen Berg

Thelma Sampson

Barbara Redlich

## Publisher

Nigel D Raincock  
nigel@thetravelsociety.com

## Administrator

Debbie Philip  
debbie@thetravelsociety.com

## Graphic Design

Yong Park  
yong@thetravelsociety.com

## Circulation Manager

Matt Oliver  
matt@thetravelsociety.com

**TravelScoop** (ISSN#0822-9228) is an independent, member-funded consumer newsletter published in Canada ten times a year. (monthly, with combined issues in February/March & July/August). Although extreme care is taken to ensure the accuracy of material herein, **TravelScoop** does not assume any liability for errors or omissions, for changes in fares or schedules, or for readers' decisions based on the opinions of the editor or writers. Readers are advised to confirm all information prior to booking.

### Membership rates for CANADA (inc GST):

1 year - \$ 49.00

2 years - \$ 95.00

3 years - \$ 140.00

USA: 1 year - \$ 80.00 (inc. postage)

World: 1 year - \$ 80.00 (inc. postage)

### Back issues:

1 issue - \$ 5.00 3 issues - \$ 10.00

Copyright 2003 by **The Travel Society Inc.**

Contents may not be reproduced in whole or part without written permission from the publisher.

### Travel Scoop Inc.

218 - 1033 Bay Street,

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M5S 3A5

Tel: 416 926 0111 Fax: 416 926 0222

e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com

web-site: www.thetravelsociety.com

**Postmaster:** Send address corrections to the above address; we do not pay return postage ... we pay enough already! *Thanks!*

Printed in Canada. GST Reg # R135785962  
Publications Mail Registration # 9925

Mail preference: From time to time, we make our membership list available to specific reputable companies and organizations whose products and/or services we believe will be of interest to you. If you do not want your name to be made available, please enclose your mailing label and initial here \_\_\_\_\_

June 2003

Vol. 21, No. 5

## From your Editor's desk...



On the whole I am not a fan of those self-improvement seminars or self-help books, not because I don't think I need 'improving' but because I forget what was imparted soon after the talk is over or the book finished. (And I've always remembered a piece of advice I received when my first child was born: "If you read books on how to bring up baby you'll end up with other people's children!")

I do, however, have some sayings and axioms pinned up around the spaces I inhabit, and one that I love is "Regret for the past and fear of the future are two thieves who rob us of our present." (If anyone knows who penned it, I'd love to know.) I thought of this recently as I was enjoying a trip to England and then to Greece while my just-thirty daughter was enjoying a spot of sailing in Mexico, my twenty-something son was enjoying a spot of kite-boarding on the Outer Banks of North Carolina and husband/father was doing a spot of work back in Toronto.

Of course I think and worry a little about my family as they set off from their homes, whether it's on a short drive or a long flight. But would I wish them to be fearful of the future, to live unexciting lives and, when they are old, to be full of regrets for adventures and opportunities missed in the past? Of course not.

If you're a *TravelScoop* reader you love, as my family does, to travel. Keep the bad news in perspective. I read somewhere recently that we have about a one in nine million chance of being in some way *involved* in a terrorist attack. We've all been reading the serious SARS and West Nile threats ... but consider these against the size of the relevant populations. We are hearing a lot about those threats, but I bet most of you didn't know that each year an average of over 2,500 people worldwide (yes, including the United States) contract the plague and thus face death or very serious side-effects. And remember, for a moment, the millions of accidents that happen at home!

Let's lighten up. Let's take a trip. This coming week-end I urge you to set off for somewhere close to home that you haven't yet visited. And for the future, consider all those beautiful and safe places on our planet still waiting to be discovered ... by you! Don't be fearful and don't wait for those regrets to set in. Galapagos Islands anyone?

## coming in *July*

- *Athens countdown*

- *A German getaway*

- *Kapawi, Ecuador*

## Update Items

As we go to print, good news from Hong Kong and Guangdong Province of China that the World Health Organization has removed its travel warning for those regions "because the SARS situation in these areas has now been improved significantly" and cases "are being contained". Today a *TravelScoop* representative attended a press conference held by various Hong Kong organizations, including the Hong Kong Tourism Board together with a representative from Cathay Pacific Airlines, and heard that the region has met all of WHO's criteria for containing the disease. This tourism setback for the region follows a record-breaking 2002 for Canadian visitors to the region, but all the tourism folk in Hong Kong are looking forward to welcoming visitors again to a "cleaner and safer" destination. In the meantime, prepare for a variety of promotional events in Canada throughout the rest of 2003: Hong Kong film festivals in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary and Hong Kong "expos", including photo exhibitions, in Quebec City, Ottawa and Montreal.

Singles who fancy a quick getaway to the sun will welcome the fact that Signature Vacations have waived the single supplement at a number of all-inclusive hotels in Cuba and the Dominican Republic on selected dates this year. Of course you don't have to travel single to take advantage of this offer ... you may like to travel with a friend but enjoy a room on your own. Ask your agent for details or check out [www.signaturevacation.com](http://www.signaturevacation.com)

Alpine Slovenia and Coastal Croatia are two unusual destinations being offered by WestCan Treks this summer. If this 15-day adventure, said to be in spectacular countryside, with land-only prices from C\$2,095, appeals call 1 800 661 7265 or visit [www.westcantreks.com](http://www.westcantreks.com) The company can arrange the flights from Canada to Slovenia for you.

## This Month's Winning Scoop

# Plan to Include Porto – Home of Port Wine – in Your Tour of Portugal

by John and Doreen Berg

Portugal's second largest city, Porto, is not only famous for its sweet port wines, but also offers magnificent historical sites, great sight-seeing and wonderful food. This vibrant city is situated high on a gorge cut by the Dauro River overlooking its world famous wine lodges that are located across the river in Villa Nova da Gaia. The lodges are within easy walking distance from the city's centre. Visiting the wine lodges is the best way to sample local port as most offer free tours and, best of all, free port samples!

Upon arriving at the Porto bus depot we were directed to a city bus and with the assistance of a resident found our way to our hotel, the Residencia Paris, R. Fabrica, 27-29, Porto, tel: 011 351 22 207 31 40, fax: 22 207 31 49. A very good continental breakfast was included in the price of about C\$50 for our spacious double room (number 207). This property is located in the historic downtown area. The hotel's English speaking manager was most helpful and provided us with a city map and valuable information.

From our hotel we were within easy walking distance of the tourist office and the major historical sites. We were able to visit the city's main attractions during the three days we were in Porto. Walking the narrow streets, observing the elegance of the closely packed homes and buildings was most interesting as there was

### ***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](mailto:ann@thetravelsociety.com) on diskettes, or CD.

something different at each turn. To extend our city knowledge we boarded a local bus to visit the newer residential areas and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Again the locals were most helpful, assisting us in locating bus stops and our destinations.

The hotel manager recommended the Abadia Restaurant which served typical Portuguese foods. The first evening we discovered that the portions were so huge that we were embarrassed by the amount of food left on our plates! Next evening we found ourselves heading back to the same restaurant because the meal and service was excellent. But now we ordered only one main dish to share. With our new found strategy we're happy to report that we were able to devour the complete meal, washed down with local red wine. We left the restaurant, satisfied, yet with flatter stomachs and fatter wallets.

On the overcast morning of the fourth day we loaded our backpacks for a short walk to the centrally-located railway station. Before boarding our train for Lisbon we viewed and photographed the beautiful *azulejos* or ceramic murals that decorate the station's walls. An interesting location to find a wonderful free

collection of artwork! We left Porto, or "Opor" as the locals refer to their city, with many fond memories, colourful photographs and a clearer understanding as to why Porto was designated a "Cultural Capital of Europe for 2001".

Porto was just one stop on our tour through Spain and Portugal (and Morocco too). We travelled in October and November and found it easy to book accommodations as we travelled. We only pre-booked Madrid, our arrival city, so that we had accommodations for our first night. Throughout our trip we found that the buses and/or trains were comfortable, easy to locate, and reasonably priced and best of all took us to the places we wished to visit. An example of costs: buses from Madrid via Avila, Salamanca to the border at Fuenlas de Onoro was C\$24 pp and from Fuenlas de Onoro to Porto cost \$27 pp. We could have taken the InterNorte bus from Salamanca directly to Porto except it left at 5:30 a.m.

As a guide we used *Let's Go Spain and Portugal, including Morocco*. We selected this budget travel guide as it covered all three countries we wished to visit. More specifically, using one guide book reduced my backpack weight and for me this is critical. Never having used the *Let's Go* series we were not sure if we would like it or not. Fortunately, we found it to be an excellent guide.

Would we do it all again? Most certainly! I would be happy to e-mail directly with any readers who would like more detailed information regarding our trip.

*John and Doreen Berg  
(jberg@prcn.org)  
Powell River, B.C.*

## Your Scoops

*Here's more news for Portugal ...*  
**Tips for Lisbon**

If a driving vacation in Portugal is in your plans we have a few tips on visiting Lisbon that we would like to share. Do take one of the tolled expressways into the city. You will cross the Tagus River on the spectacular 25<sup>th</sup> April Bridge – similar to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco – see the huge statue of Christ the King and be in downtown Lisbon before you know it. We initially made the wrong choice. We drove in using one of the untolled highways thinking we would see more of the countryside. But it was heavily trafficked with many traffic lights and lined with commercial and industrial yards.

Once in the city, park your car and explore using one of the many convenient buses, trams or the metro. Or, better still, walk. Lisbon is a wonderful city for walking. We chose a hotel near Eduardo VII Park in the Pombal area (the Best Western Eduardo VII Hotel, tel: 011 351 21 356 88 00, fax: 011 351 21 356 88 33, [www.hoteleduardovii.pt](http://www.hoteleduardovii.pt)). The park itself is lovely with many gardens and hot and cold *estufas* (greenhouses). The famous Gulbenkian Museum is in this area. We walked down the Avenue de Liberdade – a huge park-like boulevard about 1.5 km long – to the centre of the city, known as the Rossio.

Hotels in this area and all over Lisbon can be found in the magazine *Lisboa Step by Step* or *Follow Me Lisboa*, published by Turismo de Lisboa ([www.atl-turismolis-](http://www.atl-turismolis-)

**How about giving a subscription to *TravelScoop* as a gift when birthdays come around this year? Call Debbie at 1 877 926 2500 and she will arrange it for you without delay.**

boa.pt). We obtained this magazine, and other literature, from the Portuguese Tourist Office in Toronto (416 921 7376). The publications are full of information on events and things to see, as well as accommodation. They can also be picked up at any tourist information centre in Lisbon.

Lisbon also has a Lisboa Card that allows unlimited travel on all public transport, entrance to 27 museums and reductions at other sites of interest. All major sites – such as Belem Town, the Jeronimos Monastery, the Castelo and even several palaces in Sintra – are included. The card is a must and costs €11.25 for 24 hours, €18.50 for 48 hours and €23.50 for 72 hours (€1 = C\$1.60). These cards can be bought at any of the Tourist Information Centres or at the “Ask Me” kiosks around the city and at the airport. The cards come with a detailed guide in Portuguese and English that gives maps of all the transportation routes, descriptions of the sites, parking information, eating areas, disabled access and more.

A ride on the trams is a must, especially the famous #28 that is a great tour of the narrow streets of the Alfama district, the Castelo and the Barrio Alto areas. Lisbon also has several funiculars that go up and down some of the steeper hills. Try the Elevador de Bica or the Elevador de Santa Juste for some great views of the city. Please don't miss Lisbon when you travel to Portugal!

*Thelma Sampson  
Dryden, ON*

## B&B in Blyth, Ontario

As many regular readers may remember, my wife and I attend the Blyth Festival at Blyth in south-western Ontario in order to see well-produced Canadian plays. As part of our regimen, we like to seek out new B&B's to try each year. Last year, we stayed at Sybille & Ron's Garden B&B and thoroughly enjoyed it.

As well as enjoying the plays at the Festival Theatre we rose early and walked around the town of Hensall. We were rather disappointed to find the main street lined with empty shops. It's still sad to see that these small towns are gradually losing their businesses to the malls. In particular, we mourn the loss of the local baker: no more fresh hot rolls and coffee cake for our picnics! However, we did notice two prosperous agri-businesses, one a co-op and the other private, that seemed to be very busy, even at 6:30 in the morning.

When we arrived back at the B&B, our hostess was busy picking berries from the garden for breakfast. Of course, my wife joined in as she was raised on a small fruit farm in B.C! Breakfast was sumptuous, but we find this is normal in south-western Ontario B&B's. If you're thinking visiting the Blyth Festival this summer, think, too, of Sybille and Ron. They are located at 74 London Road, Hensall, ON, NOM 1X0, tel.: 519 262 3431 or 1 800 665 7290, fax: 519 262 3236, e-mail: [sybille@on.aibn.com](mailto:sybille@on.aibn.com), [www.bbcanada.com/3695.html](http://www.bbcanada.com/3695.html). The Blyth Festival will run from 16 June to 6 September. For details call 1 877 862 5984 or visit [www.blythfestival.com](http://www.blythfestival.com)

*Ed Lyons  
Toronto, ON*

## News from England

On a short trip to south central England in April this year, we rented, on short notice via the internet, a most charming and comfortable small house in a Wiltshire village. It cost £268 per week for two people (£1 = approx. C\$2.24). We made the reservation through **Hideaways**, which has a superb website [www.hideaways.co.uk](http://www.hideaways.co.uk) and very helpful people handling e-mails.

The area is rich in **National Trust** properties so we tried to pre-purchase a Touring Pass on line at [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk). These cost £25 per couple for one week, £32.50 for two weeks, with single and family passes also available. Unfortunately the website was not quite ready to process these before we left (it is now), nor are the passes available for purchase at the sites, so we reluctantly paid for a year's membership (£57.50 per couple, sold at nearly every property) as individual entry rates really add up (most are around £6 pp) with no senior discounts. In just eight days we visited 11 properties (including Lacock, Stourhead, Kingston Lacy and Montacute House) that would have cost us about £120 by regular admission, so in fact the membership was well worth it. It includes the current *National Trust Handbook* and a quarterly magazine (*a fine publication - Ed.*). The Touring Pass is the best bargain for a short trip, of course, but you must allow enough time for its processing and posting from London.

*Betty Ann Crosbie  
Toronto, ON*

*continued from page 1*

delights”, but by that time the island was widely known as *Celao*, derived from the Chinese *Si-lan*, which Europeans altered to *Seylan*, the Dutch adjusted to *Zeilan* and the British finally changed to *Ceylon*. When the island gained independence from its colonial rulers it changed its name once again to that by which it is known today: *Sri Lanka*, or “beautiful land”.

Of course one has to do a little planning to reach the serendipitous, delightful and beautiful land of Sri Lanka. But that’s not difficult, many have found their way there before you, and a surprising and exotic destination awaits you.

Sri Lanka has, in fact, long been a popular destination among Europeans, especially the British, who account for an estimated 70% of all visitors. But long years of civil strife rendered Sri Lanka unappealing to many, even though “the troubles” were largely confined to the north and no tourists were ever targets. But with a peace process now firmly underway Sri Lanka is opening its doors wide to travellers with the slogan “Culture, nature and adventure ... all within a small space.” For culture there’s an ancient history (including seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites) and a population of charming people. For nature lovers there’s magnificent inland and coastal scenery; glorious flora such as abundant, hibiscus and frangipani, fragrant jasmine, astonishing ginger lilies and trumpet flowers all flourishing in a land dotted with flame-coloured African tulip trees and acres of wild sunflower bushes. And then there are the birds. Sri Lanka, with over 400 species, of which 24 are unique to the island, is a birdwatcher’s paradise. On my stay I was almost late joining my group one morning because the tree outside my bedroom window was alive with green parrots, and on another occasion I stalked a splendid kingfisher around the ponds of my hotel grounds. And for adventurers there’s the usual selection of water sports on the coast – fishing, snorkeling, scuba, windsurfing and yacht tours – while inland there’s white-water rafting, golf, mountain biking and hiking. Your tour company or hotel concierge will be able to assist you in finding the activity or your choice and many sports clubs are happy to accept foreign visitors.

But let’s get down to some practical information. SriLankan Airlines is the oldest airline in Asia, but it

boasts the youngest fleet and many awards. Unfortunately the airline does not fly from North America, so a flight to Europe is necessary. I first flew British Airways, taking the latest overnight flight from Toronto to Heathrow (Terminal 4) and was pleased to find that my Sri Lanka Air flight, due to leave at 2:15 p.m, also left from that terminal. The flight from England to Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, takes approximately 10 hours and after the YYZ/LHR ‘overnighter’ and then SriLankan Airline’s tasty lunch (or was it dinner!?) with wine, I managed quite a long sleep overnight and arrived feeling surprisingly fresh the next morning at a local time of 6.30.

If you have not arranged for an airport transfer with your tour company you can reach downtown Colombo from the airport via luxury taxi for approximately US\$20. It is not recommended that visitors rent cars. Vehicles and drivers are surprisingly cheap and being driven will add to your enjoyment and save you considerable stress.

Depending on the traffic airport to Colombo trip takes an hour or more, but it will fascinate you with its first glimpses of urban life. Items on the streets include overcrowded buses, cars, motor-

bikes, loaded farm vehicles, bicycles, *tuk-tuks* (trishaws) and the odd placid cow threading its way through the chaos; while on the sidewalks you’ll see schoolchildren in spotless uniforms, half-naked infants playing in puddles, women in gorgeous saris, teenage boys in jeans, bleak beggars, and an assortment of animals: chickens, pigs, dogs, scavenging birds and so on. Lining the streets are tiny shops, fruit stalls, signs both strange and familiar (Pizza Hut, Pepsi, Samsung, Shell, Bic, Guinness), Buddhist shrines, churches, flashy car showrooms, dismal hovels and modern apartment buildings. Over the noise of the streets come the constant whistles of the police as they attempt to regulate the traffic.

After all this it was almost like waking from a dream (or walking into one) to find myself in the cool, quiet, soaring lobby of the Colombo Hilton Hotel. I sunk into a plush sofa beside baskets of fresh orchids while staff plied me with fruit juices and brought check-in forms for me to fill out. If it’s luxury you’re after there’s no need to worry that Sri Lanka cannot deliver. I stayed in several properties – and visited

---

**Sri Lanka, with over 400 species, of which 24 are unique to the island, is a birdwatcher’s paradise.**

---

many more – that are most definitely world class. I was soon to discover the buffet breakfast and lunch at the Hilton are outstanding, the dinner offered in the prettily-lit grounds delicious and the pool area ideal for relaxing in the heart of the city. The Trans-Asia is another fine Colombo hotel. The Trans-Asia is another fine Colombo hotel.

After checking in I was ready for a walk and some fresh air. The area known as Fort (not *the* Fort since any fortifications have long since vanished) adjacent to the Hilton is rather shabby and some boy soldiers were still manning barricades around the government buildings, though the reason for this is unclear as everyone merely walks around them. There are, however, some fine but shabby old colonial buildings here, including the ‘once-famous-among-Colonial-matrons-but-now-sad’ department store called Cargills (Ceylon) Limited. And you’ll want a glimpse of the Lighthouse Clock Tower, designed and financed by a Victorian British governor’s wife in a futile attempt to instill punctuality into the local people and subsequently used as a lighthouse, even though it’s several blocks inland!

More pleasant by far for a walk is the famous Galle Face Green, a long wide lawn (if it’s rained recently; if not it earns the locals’ name Galle Face Brown) and beach promenade much beloved by residents. It is here, at one end of the green, that you’ll find the equally famous Galle Face Hotel, which claims to be the oldest hotel east of Suez. You may decide to stay here and soak up the incomparable Colonial atmosphere in the hotel’s stunning entrance hall, its vast guestrooms, and atmosphere-laden dining room and terrace bar. The rich and famous have gone before you. You’ll find a plaque in the entrance listing the celebrities that have stayed here: from presidents and princes to actors and astronauts. A memorable

place to stay or, if you choose more modern luxuries, do at least stop by for tea or a drink on the terrace overlooking the ocean.

The city spreads out to the south and west of Galle Face Green, offering a further selection of luxurious hotels, smart shopping malls, shabby streets and the cool calm of the city’s parks and most luxurious residential area: Cinnamon Gardens, which is well worth a drive through for a feeling of more stately times. Let your hotel concierge arrange a taxi or trishaw for you at an agreed rate (perhaps hourly) for a city tour. Your guide book will describe the Buddhist Temples that be visited, the National and Natural History Museums, the National Art Gallery and the Independence Commemoration Hall in Independence Square so you can plan your itinerary around your interests.

While it’s always interesting to see any destination’s major city, you probably won’t need more than two days to explore Colombo. And why stay longer when the beauty and glories of the rest of the island beckon?

The guide company used by our group was Hemtours. Our guide Mr Daya and his assistant Kumar were knowledgeable, kind and considerate and nothing was too much trouble for them. After our couple of free days exploring

Colombo we set out with them to see some of the island’s highlights in the eight days at our disposal. Of course I recommend spending longer on the island – far longer if possible – for there is much to see and experience and some delightful places to relax in between your sightseeing.

Our visit was designed to cover a few of the island’s highlights: the Sigiriya Rock Fortress, the Pinnawela Elephant Sanctuary, the temples, statues and great reclining Buddha of Polonnaruwa, the magical Hill Capital city of Kandy, the tea plantations in the



*A gracious welcome awaits you at the famous old Galle Face Hotel (Wallace)*

beautiful hill country, the beach resort of Bentota and the ancient city of Galle. Those with more time at their disposal will find much more to explore, including the island's many national parks and gardens, the colonial towns in the hills and the glorious coastal regions, a few of which we could only glimpse.

Our first, and farthest, destination was Polonnaruwa, the capital of Sri Lanka in medieval times, located in the north-west central region of the island. But as our route there took us close to the Pinawella Elephant Orphanage (about 80 km from Colombo) we made that our first stop. This facility is government run and is a sanctuary for abandoned or

injured baby elephants who are reared and, it is hoped, trained to become working animals. They inhabit a large, natural area where they are free to roam, but come together in the river to bathe and be fed and to entertain the tourists. Elephants are revered in Sri Lanka. They

are a common sight along the roads, on farms, at tourist sites and in processions, where they are often decorated in splendidly embroidered cloths. And look for them in Sri Lanka's exotic decorative arts.

Polonnaruwa should be on everyone's Sri Lankan itinerary. Now one of the island's UNESCO sites, it's a vast complex of temples, ruined palaces, shrines, a vast lake-like reservoir, an Archaeological Museum and – the highlight for most – the massive Gal Vihara rock sculptures of Buddha. It became the island's capital in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD when the existing capital – Anuradhapura – suffered a series of invasions from India.

Polonnaruwa lies about 30 km as the crow flies due east of another of Sri Lanka's "must see" sights – the spectacular rock fortress of Sigiriya, regarded by many as the eighth wonder of the world. Fifteen cen-

turies ago Kassapa, the son of King Dhatusena, imprisoned and later killed his father and seized the throne. Fearing an eventual attack from his royal brother, who had fled to India, Kassapa built an incredible palace atop the 32-acre Sigiriya rock which rises 180 metres from the surrounding jungle. The great rock was incorporated into a gigantic lion statue by the addition of a brick head and fore-quarters, of which only the immense paws remain, and thereafter became known as the Lion Rock. Surrounding the rock the king built two moats for defense and a series of gardens for beauty, while atop the rock he built a paradise of palaces, pavilions, gardens, pools and even a swimming pool.

Only the foundations remain today (and the swimming pool), but the views are spectacular, the surrounding gardens beautifully kept and the sensuous frescoes of Sigiriya maidens decorating the ascent to the top of the rock still clearly visible.

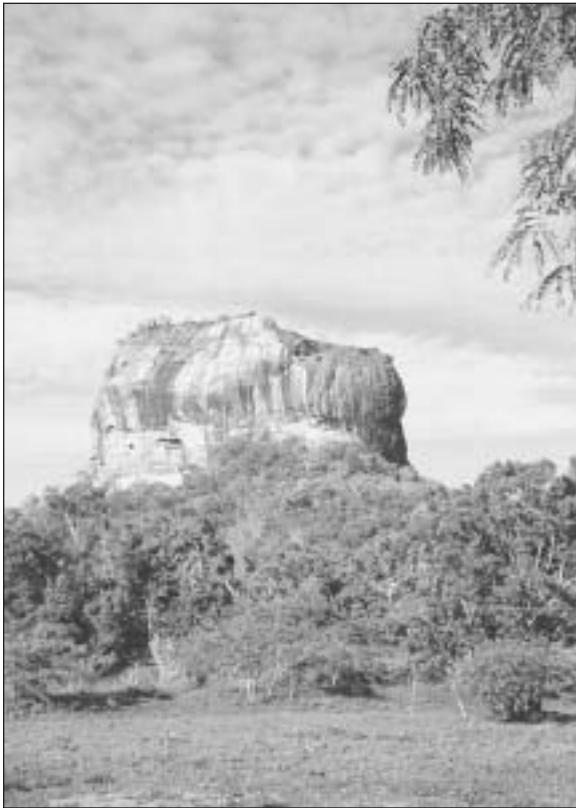
In this area I stayed at the Sigiriya Village, a charming resort within sight of



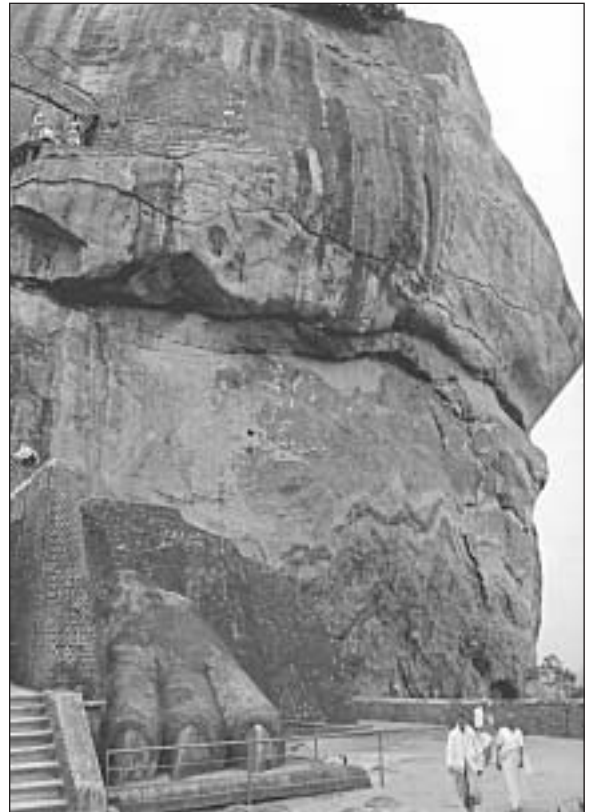
*Up close with the elephants of Pinnawela (wallace)*

the rock, which enabled me to ascend the rock quite early in the morning while it was still cool. However, the ascent is not nearly as challenging as it appears. The initial approach is through a series of terraced gardens, while a metal staircase takes one from the great 'paws' to the summit. Imagine what it must have been like approaching the rock through the lion's mouth! At the half-way mark refreshments, postcards and souvenir books are available.

The Sigiriya Village hotel consists of pretty rooms set in cottages in quiet and lovely gardens. (Though it wasn't so quiet when a group of monkeys got into my roof space in the middle of the night!) The main building is thatched but open to the elements on all sides and there's a lovely pool with a view of the Sigiriya rock in the main gardens. There's also a Sri Lankan-style spa here, so it's time to say a word about the renowned Sri



*The Sigiriya Rock Fortress (Wallace)*



*The final approach to the Rock Fortress (Wallace)*



*The Kandyan Hotel - a palace in the hills (Wallace)*



*Greetings from the staff at the Kandyan Hotel (Wallace)*

Lankan therapies now used all over the world and known as Ayurveda, or herbal healing. Ayurvedic remedies for what ails you range from a wide variety of natural herbs for specific problems to massages, herbal baths and other treats for those merely wishing to relax and pamper themselves. For specific herbal remedies you might like to consult a recognized specialist while the pampering you'll find in most sizeable hotels and resorts.

The beautiful town of Kandy was next on our itinerary. And my accommodation here was literally jaw-dropping. Le Kandyan Hotel calls itself 'A Palace in the Hills', an apt description. It's a fine old hotel set high above the town, complete with exotically-costumed staff, a wonderful spa, a swimming pool and a vast fan-cooled bar and dining room. My room contained traditional mahogany furniture, elephant-motif fabrics and a balcony with a superb view and parrots in the nearby trees. Arriving here after a long drive was simply heavenly! I treated myself to a reflexology session in the spa and then watched the sun set over the surrounding hills from beside the swimming pool, cocktail in hand. It was one of life's perfect moments!

Your guide book (I used the Insight Guide *Sri*

*Lanka*) will tell you all about Kandy (a UNESCO site) and its beautiful approach roads through the hills. The Kandyan kingdom was the last independent state in Sri Lanka and many relics of its glorious past remain: the



*The City of Kandy (Wallace)*

though nobody ever sees it and it is now, after a bizarre history, kept in a series of six caskets of diminishing size in the heart of its own revered temple. Its true



*Sri Lanka offers many pleasant restaurants throughout the countryside (Wallace)*

nature is a matter of contention. It fell into British hands in 1815, the caskets were opened and though they did, indeed, contain a tooth, its size led the desecrators to believe it came from a crocodile! For more down-to-earth, modern pleasures while in delightful Kandy don't miss the Municipal Market, with its

displays of food downstairs and beautiful textiles and crafts on the upper level. And on many nights in Kandy there is a cultural dance performance by Pathi's Dance Lanka, with drums, dancing and exotic costumes. This is staged in the YMBA Hall (with fire-

Royal Palace complex, many museums recording and displaying the past, superb botanical gardens, Kandy Lake, the old Queen's Hotel and, for many, the highlight ... the Temple of the Tooth. The above guide states this tooth is "the most sacred relic of Buddhism and the most precious symbol of Sinhalese pride"

walking outside afterwards) and is well worth catching.

No trip to Sri Lanka would be complete without at least a drive through the beautiful hill country with its tea plantations. You will want to stop for photos of the sari-clad tea pickers but remember, they will send an emissary down to you for a tip! Several tea plantations and their factories are open for visits. Ask your guide if you are interested.

After all these inland explorations you may feel the ocean beckoning. This is an island after all. If you have a little ocean-side luxury in mind you will be thrilled by a stay in Saman Villas, close to Bentota, just 65 km south of Colombo. This property is perched on a rocky headland dividing two long, unspoiled beaches of golden sand, backed by dense green coconut plantations. The views are magnificent, especially over the inviting "infinity edged" swimming pool that appears to merge with the Indian Ocean beyond. Rooms are in ocean-view villas and offer every luxury as well as the beautiful views. And there's a good library of fascinating books here covering every aspect of Sri Lankan life, from history to birds. For those whose pockets are not so deep, the Bentota Beach Hotel is fine although it resembles beach hotels the world over, with the exception of its resident elephant!

Staying in Bentota enables you to take a day trip to historic Galle, another ancient city recognized by UNESCO. (There's a Turtle Hatchery on the way which is interesting.) In old Galle you can walk the fortification walls and explore the Fort and the quaint streets, although the pleasures here can be spoilt by the pestering hawkers trying to sell lace and other handicrafts. Take refuge when you need to in the delightful, atmospheric old Cloisenberg Hotel and Restaurant, on Havelock Road, once the residence of Captain Bayley, manager of the P&O Line.

I feel I've skimmed over the sites and sights I enjoyed in Sri Lanka. But tales of a country whose history goes back thousands of years could fill many volumes. Books and literature abound in libraries and on the web. Let me end by saying this is an exotic and fascinating land waiting to welcome tourists with many fine hotels and tourist attractions. Its shy but charming people are one of its greatest assets. Learn to greet everyone with a small bow over joined hands and you will receive a warm welcome and leave with many delightful memories.

**Some details ...**

**Visas:** Canadian tourists visiting Sri Lanka will be given free visas, valid for 30 days, at their port of entry.

**Climate:** the best time to visit Sri Lanka is between November and April.

**Accommodation:** I haven't given prices for the properties mentioned here because they vary considerably with the manner in which you reserve. I advise you to use the services of a local tour operator such as Hemtours (Level 06, Hemas House, 75 Braybrooke Place, Colombo 2, tel: 011 94 1 300001/2, fax: 011 94 1 300003/4, [www.hemtours.com](http://www.hemtours.com)). They offer a wide variety of ready-planned tours, or they can custom-design an itinerary for you, provide a driver and car (or mini-bus if you go in a small group) at an amazingly low rate for such a luxury and make all reservations at very competitive prices. Most properties offer accommodation for drivers and guides. Alternatively you may decide to take one of SriLankan Airlines inclusive holidays. Their Canadian office can be reached at 1 800 667 2252 (or 1 866 940 2424 for Québec readers) and they can send you their fine *SriLankan Holidays & Stopovers* brochure which is sure to tempt you.

Sri Lanka offers all kinds of accommodation, from fine five-star hotels to plantations converted into guest-houses and rustic government-run rest houses. All the properties mentioned in this article, reserved through Hemtours, were memorable. They, and many other fine properties are all listed and illustrated in the Sri Lankan Airways *Holidays* brochure mentioned above, or they can be found on the web, or if you would like specific contact details please e-mail me and I'll send them to you. (It is also worth mentioning here that the Kandalama Hotel in Dambulla, which unfortunately I didn't have time to visit, has been the winner of numerous prestigious international environmental awards and was the first hotel in Asia to receive Green Globe certification. Just another indication of the sort of accommodation you can expect in Sri Lanka.)

**Food:** the food in Sri Lanka is delicious. A meal described as 'rice and curry' turns out to be a composite meal of curries, vegetables and *sambols* (pickles) accompanied by as much rice as you wish to cool the mouth. Test a small forkful (or use your fingers as the locals do) of your curry with plenty of rice to ascertain its spiciness and watch those pickles ... it is often they that contain the fire! The island is abundant in fruit and vegetables and vegetarians will enjoy a fascinating cuisine. And don't forget to try the famous egg hopper at breakfast!

**Food costs:** You will find food in Sri Lanka extreme-

# The Day of the Dead in Mexico

by *Thelma Sampson*

We spent a month last fall in Mexico City, then toured the colonial cities and the archeological sites around the city. Many of the places we visited have been written up in *TravelScoop* previously and we found it interesting comparing our experiences with those accounts.

One of the events we haven't seen written about, and one of the most interesting, was the Day of the Dead Festival or *Día de los Muertos* which is celebrated each year from 31 October – 2 November. This occasion is observed throughout Mexico with displays and services, but in the province of Michoacan, particularly the city of Patzcuaro, it is a spiritual and religious event of great importance.

Although the festival coincides with the Christian All Saints Day, it really dates back to the pre-Spanish Tarascan people who revered their dead and thought that at this time of year the spirits of the dead could pass between their final resting places and earth to commune with their relatives still living. After the Conquest, in an attempt to turn the festival into a Christian celebration, Spanish priests decreed the date should co-incide with All Souls' (or Saints') Day.

Patzcuaro and Lake Patzcuaro are considered the door to the sky and thus is the place where the spirits can pass through.

The celebration starts on 31 October with the dec-

orating of the cemeteries and all the graves. The marigold is considered the flower of this festival and there are fields of flowers especially planted to be used at this time. It is not unusual to see small trucks loaded with brilliant marigolds being taken to the cemeteries. The graves themselves are covered with the marigold petals. There are huge arches on many gravesites with

pictures of the dead, memorabilia connected with events enjoyed and things pertaining to their time on earth. Their favourite foods are prepared and the entire family spends the night of Noche de Muertos (night of the dead) at the cemetery to commune with the dead, visit with living relatives and to eat and drink. These gatherings manage to be somber and cheerful at the same time. The entire cemetery is lit with hundreds of candles that can be seen from many miles away. The first day of November is the festival to communicate with, and remember, children (called *angelitos*) who have died, while 2 November is the day especially for deceased adults.

Throughout Mexico at this time there are sugar and chocolate sculptures of

skulls, skeletons, coffins and animals that can be bought and placed on the graves or in the displays. They come in all sizes and colors and can be bought in many stores. They are called *ofrendas* or offerings to the dead and are thought to lure the departed back for



*Bizarre skeletal models help Mexicans celebrate the Day of the Dead (Sampson)*

a visit. Skeletal figures cheerfully playing music, dancing, and engaging in all the normal daily activities are also seen everywhere at his time of year.

In the town of Capula, about 40 km northwest of Patzcuaro, there are several workshops that make the skeletal earthenware figures, particularly the famous Catrina and Catrin figures. Of the clay figures, Calavera Catrina is the most famous of the skeletons. She is stately, wears a huge hat and a floor length gown with a skeletal midriff. She can be seen in a variety of poses, in endless variations, all over Mexico and is included in Diego Rivera's famous fresco *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda*, which can be seen in its own special museum in Mexico City.

The fascination with death and skeletons seems to continually remind the Mexicans of their own mortality. This festival attracts many tourists all over Mexico, who are welcome to view the proceedings in a respectful and quiet way, not interrupting those who are there to revere and commune with their departed.

While visiting this area we stayed in the lovely colonial city of Morelia, the state capital of Michoacan about 30 minutes drive from Patzcuaro. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site with wonderful 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish buildings, a huge cathedral, many museums and lots of craft markets. It's a great spot to stay and tour this interesting province. The winter sanctuary of the Monarch butterfly (up to 20 million of them) is worth a visit too. Angangueo, Ocampo and Zitacuaro, where this phenomenon can be observed, are about an hour's drive east of Morelia towards Mexico City.

The Hotel Alameda is located on the corner of the *zocalo* in Morelia. It is quite a modern hotel with all

modern conveniences but still offers much colonial Spanish charm. It has a restaurant and bar and great views from the rooftop. They offer free internet usage. Prices from about US\$80 for a double room, including breakfast. The property is located at Avenida Madero Pte. 313, Morelia 58000, tel: 011 52 43 12 20 23, fax: 011 52 43 13 87 27, e-mail: [ventasha@hotel-alameda.com](mailto:ventasha@hotel-alameda.com), [www.hotel-alameda.com.mx](http://www.hotel-alameda.com.mx)

*When Thelma and Barry Sampson are not travelling they call Dryden, ON, home.*

### Editor's Note

The Insight Guide *Mexico* includes these paragraphs which may be of interest to potential visitors to

Patzcuaro region: "There are boat trips to the island of **Janitzio**, in the middle of **Lake Patzcuaro**, with its giant 40 meter sculpture of Independence hero, **Jose Maria Morelos**. You can climb inside the statue, right up to the clenched fist, for a wonderful



*A section of Diego Rivera's fresco showing the Catrina figure in the centre*

panoramic view.

Janitzio is especially known for its **Day of the Dead** celebrations, when local people cross the lake in a procession of candlelit canoes, bringing flowers, food and other offers to the cemetery. In order to preserve the intimacy of the occasion, tourists are discouraged from attending the all-night vigil in Janitzio, but there are other cemeteries in the region where visitors are welcome to observe the celebrations." Visitors are also welcome, apparently, to watch the processions across Lake Patzcuaro from the shore. Visitors to Mexico over these dates will also find Day of the Dead celebrations in most Mexican villages, towns and cities with the cities staging wonderful exhibitions of organized *ofrendas*. ■

# RUGBY – A UTOPIAN DREAM IN TENNESSEE

by Barbara Redlich

The village of Rugby lies on the picturesque and peaceful plateau of the Cumberland Mountains in eastern Tennessee. It can be reached quite easily via the scenic backroads from Cookeville and Knoxville. Its inconspicuous appearance belies the fact that in terms of historical significance it has few rivals.

Thomas Hughes, best remembered as the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, founded Rugby. But he was also a social reformer and, very much like Sir Thomas More, had many utopian ideals. His most ambitious aim was to found a class-free and co-operative society. He heard about a company of New England gentlemen who wanted to "promote migration to fertile unoccupied lands" and who had stated that the mountain plateau of East Tennessee offered tremendous potential for settlement.

This was the chance Hughes had been waiting for. It offered a great opportunity for the second sons of England's landed gentry who, under the prevailing British custom of primogeniture, had to find work in education, law, medicine, the church or the military to be socially acceptable as all property went to the oldest son. Many second and subsequent sons preferred to work the land, and immigration offered them this opportunity.

Thomas Hughes came to Tennessee and on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1880 formally opened a colony, which he named Rugby after the British public school he had attended and which is the setting for *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Hughes himself returned quite frequently to England to recruit new settlers. But his 83-year-old mother lived there permanently to lend whatever support she could to her son's endeavour. Until her death at age 90 she resided at Uffington House, named after Hughes' birthplace in Oxfordshire

For a while Rugby flourished. Prospective settlers came from Britain and other American States and for a while it was the largest town in the area. But due to harsh weather conditions, a soil not as fertile as had been anticipated and financial mismanagement the community underwent a slow deterioration.

To-day every effort is made to preserve Rugby as a "Little England" in the midst of America. Over 20 of

the colony's original Victorian buildings remain. Several have been turned into Bed and Breakfast establishments, furnished with Victorian antiques. They are surrounded by covered verandahs with stupendous views over the surrounding countryside. Hiking trails, white-water rafting, biking and horseback riding are within easy reach.

The Harrow Road Café with its vaulted ceilings and brick fireplace offers delicious Fish and Chips, Welsh Rarebit, Shepherd's Pie and many other typically English dishes.

The Rugby Commissary is a faithful reproduction of the original co-operative which sold everything from garters to plowshares. Now it is a delightful gift shop. Items range from greeting cards to exquisite china. All are either handcrafted locally or imported from the U.K. Their English origins are unmistakable.

Guided tours are available and all attractions are within easy walking distance. Tours start at the Schoolhouse/Visitor Centre. While waiting for the tour to commence visitors can view exhibits which tell the history of Rugby. A video presentation is also available. The tour starts at Kingstone Lisle, Thomas Hughes home. Even though he didn't spend much time there he moved many of his personal belongings to the house and they can still be viewed. Then comes the Episcopal Church with its magnificent stained glass windows. It still contains its early furnishings, light fixtures, a rosewood organ and many fascinating plaques. The last stop is the 7,000-volume library. Most of this collection was donated by American publishers in honour of Hughes and it represents the entire spectrum of Victorian reading taste. The Bodleian Library in Oxford would be proud to own this collection.

Many special events take place throughout the year: a Valentine's Day Dinner, a festival of British and Appalachian Culture, a Halloween Ghostly Gathering, a Thanksgiving Marketplace and, of course, a many-faceted Christmas Celebration.

For information call 423 628 2441, e-mail: [rugbytn@highland.net](mailto:rugbytn@highland.net) or visit [www.historicrugby.org](http://www.historicrugby.org) And more details on visiting Tennessee can be found in the September 1998 *TravelScoop*. 📖

# Counting Diamonds

by Ann Wallace

Most readers will be familiar with the services offered by the Canadian Automobile Association and its affiliate: the American Automobile Association. They provide automotive assistance, trips, itineraries, discounts, travellers cheques, insurance and tourism literature such as maps, TourBooks, TravelBooks, CampBooks and volumes listing Bed & Breakfasts and Country Inns covering North America and the Caribbean region.

For inclusion in the TourBooks, all properties must undergo an inspection by AA personnel which, if the property passes, results in a diamond-rating process. These ratings are not scores, but are a combination of the overall quality, range of facilities and the level of services to be expected in a selection of market niches. This means that each property evaluated can either pass or fail in its category, it cannot drop a diamond and find itself placed in a lower category. The properties are then listed in the appropriate publication without charge to the property.

Economy/budget properties that fulfill the evaluation requirements receive one diamond; mid-market properties receive two, upper mid-market three while luxury properties earn the coveted four diamond rating. There is a rarely-awarded five diamond category for properties of "outstanding elegance and appeal with unique style displaying luxurious furnishings and

artistic elements."

As a customer, regardless of the category of property you choose, it is useful to know the *basic* expectations of an AAA/CAA-rated property, most of which concern your safety. It goes without saying that the establishment must be in compliance with all local, provincial/state and federal codes. It must also be in an 'acceptable' area. As the evaluator I met said, "If the

furniture is chained to the floor, the property won't pass!" In addition, the Associations require adequate lighting in all public areas (corridors, stairways, landings and parking areas), guest doors to be equipped with both a primary lock and a secondary deadbolt lock (with further stringent requirements for sliding glass doors and French doors), locks on windows and smoke detectors in each unit. All facilities associated with the property and the guest rooms must be clean and well-maintained; each unit must have adequate shades, drapes or blinds to cover all windows and glass areas, while sound-proofing must be adequate to muffle outside



noise and normal sounds in adjacent units and public areas. Any property that fails to adhere to these requirements will not receive a rating. Staff are also assessed on a 'pass' or 'fail' basis.

The *basic* furnishings required for a rating are: a comfortable bed with one mattress pad, two sheets, a

blanket, a suitable bedspread, pillows and pillowcases, together with a nightstand by each bed, a functional chair, clothes-hanging facilities with hangers and drawer space for two guests plus a wastepaper basket. Each unit must have an active light switch at the main entry, plus illumination at a writing surface, at a sitting area and at each bed. Each unit must have its own private bathroom complete with a toilet, sink with a well-lit mirror, convenient electrical outlet, shelf space and a tub or shower with a non-slip surface. The floor must be an easy-to-clean surface and carpeting is not acceptable in the toilet area. Minimum supplies consist of a cloth bath mat, two soaps, toilet tissue and, for each guest, a bath towel, hand towel, face cloth, and a drinking tumbler.

With the above information it is now easy to determine what the diamond ratings mean to the traveller. One Diamond establishments are designed for the budget traveller. They provide no-frills accommodation but must meet the basic requirements listed above. Two Diamond properties are designed to appeal to those seeking more than just the basics via modest enhancements while keeping the price moderate. Three Diamond guests are more demanding and expect

multi-faceted properties with style and upgrades throughout. Four Diamonds means you will find an upscale property in all areas: luxurious beds, furnishings, amenities and services combined with a high degree of hospitality, service and attention to detail.

A while ago I was invited to accompany a CAA evaluator on a Four Diamond property inspection. It was an interesting afternoon. The evaluator alerted me to the requirements of the check-in procedure in a luxury property (use of your name, confirmation of your requests, provision of an attendant to escort you and your belongings to your room, etc.) and then we proceeded with the physical inspection. We looked at elevators, corridor lighting and door locks. In the room we examined the quality of the wallpaper and made sure there was a ceiling trim and baseboard. We looked at the furniture and the mini-bar; we checked that the bed was made with three sheets and had a quilted bedspread; we turned on all the lights; we peered under the beds and looked under sofa cushions like children searching for coins; we turned on the radio and TV (which must be in a closed armoire) to make sure they worked efficiently and we used our fingers to check for dust like a disapproving mother-in-law. We counted the hangars (there must be at least eight, with open hooks), glasses, telephones and electrical outlets and made sure the hotel's guest-service directory, together with a supply of stationery, were ensconced in a leather cover and that the pictures on the walls were not only framed but also matted. In the bathroom we counted the towels, checked that the end of the toilet tissue was folded into a point and made sure the 'amenities' (shampoo and so on) were of a high enough quality. We called to enquire about ice, room service, restaurant reservations, laundry, dry-cleaning and a wake-up call. I'll never take a hotel room for granted again!

The total number of lodgings listed in all the Association's guides total 30,593 of which 2,385 are in Canada. Four Diamond lodgings throughout the region number 868, of which 103 are in Canada. In fact, fewer than 3% of all listed lodgings are categorized as Four Diamond. The Association also rates restaurants on a similar diamond-award plan ... a total of 14,259 in fact, of which 1,528 are in Canada.

There are four million CAA members in Canada. If you are not a member and are interested in finding out more about this organization's many services you'll probably find an office near to you, or log on to [www.caa.ca](http://www.caa.ca) for full details. 📄

**Please note ...**

**[www.thetravelsociety.com](http://www.thetravelsociety.com)**

**Our website is now up and fully operational. We will constantly endeavour to improve it and welcome your input.**

**To access the site the password will be up-dated monthly and will appear on the back page of your *TravelScoop* within the address box.**

## Travel Digest

### Canada

Peter Loppe of **Lotus Land Tours** (providing “Wilderness adventures for softies since 1993”) tells us that the Orca whales have arrived in the Strait of Georgia and are expected to remain until early October. For a whale-watching day excursion with Vancouver hotel pick-up call 604 684 4922 or 1 800 528 3531, [www.VancouverNatureAdventures.com](http://www.VancouverNatureAdventures.com)

Book a scenic train tour package with **Rocky Mountaineer Railtours** before 11 July and receive two-for-one roundtrip airfare from over 61 Canadian cities. The minimum value of the rail tour must be C\$2,399 to qualify for this deal. For full details request a brochure from your travel agent, call 1 800 665 7245 or visit [www.rockymountaineer.com](http://www.rockymountaineer.com)

Ontario’s **Voyageur Quest** has a variety of great trips scheduled for this summer. Log on to [www.voyageurquest.com](http://www.voyageurquest.com) or call 416 486 3605 or 1 800 794 9660 and discuss with John Langford or one of his great staff the many adventures (and last-minute specials) they offer. These include cottages in Algonquin Park, canoe adventures in the Park, Georgian Bay kayaking trips and more. (If you live outside Ontario and have never visited Georgian Bay and its incomparable Thirty Thousand Island region you are in for a treat. This is one of Editor Ann’s favourite places in the whole world!)

Ontario offers a wide selection of theatre festivals in beautiful locations. Last year we at *TravelScoop* enjoyed an outing to the lakeside town of **Oakville** to see the RBC Festival of Classics presentation. Sitting in a beautiful park underneath willow trees beside Lake Ontario on a balmy evening watching Shakespeare is a delightful way to spend an evening, and this event is popular with residents of the Golden Horseshoe region and, we hope, visitors to the area. This year’s production is to be *The Tempest*, due to run from 9 July to 9 August in Coronation Park, Oakville, just west of Toronto. For details visit [www.festivalofclassics.com](http://www.festivalofclassics.com) or call 905 825 4451. Prior to 25 June tickets cost \$18, after that date \$20. Wheelchair accessible.

For a good laugh, how about heading to **Montréal** this summer for the 21<sup>st</sup> edition of their hilarious *Just for Laughs* Festival? Due to take place from 10 – 20 July, this huge outdoor festival offers hundreds of shows, many of them free, and all guaranteed to lift your spirits. In all there will be 72 shows around the city, with films, performers, comedians and musicians from as far away as New Zealand and Britain. For full details call 514 790 HAHA or visit [www.haha.com](http://www.haha.com) Enjoy!

News of the arrival of icebergs has been received from our friends in **Newfoundland**. Apparently many of them are massive and data from the Canadian Ice Service indicates that this is to be a good iceberg-watching season. On a day late in May there were 34 bergs in Bonavista Bay! Icebergs are usually found as late as August, but the

earlier you head to **Newfoundland** and **Labrador** the better. For information on icebergs, whales and seabirds in the region call 1 800 563 6353 or visit [www.gov.nl.ca/tourism](http://www.gov.nl.ca/tourism). Up-to-date iceberg information can also be found at the Canadian Ice Service website [www.ice.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ice.ec.gc.ca), click on East Coast and go to the Daily Iceberg Limit Chart.

Have you sometimes thought you might like to travel to the edge of the **Arctic**? Why not make this the summer you do so. Take the 300 km trip from Cochrane to Moosonee aboard the **Polar Bear Express**. For details of this exciting, once-in-a-lifetime journey call 1 800 268 9281 or visit [www.polarbearexpress.ca](http://www.polarbearexpress.ca)

### Ireland

Tourism Ireland’s website [www.shamrock.org](http://www.shamrock.org) is featuring a variety of good-value vacation packages on offer from a range of major tour operators in Canada. The site also includes “hot offers”, a section detailing time-limited offers and booking bonuses.

### Switzerland

Perhaps you are off to Switzerland soon? If you are, and are a sports lover, you may like to know that this year the Olympic Museum in **Lausanne** is celebrating its tenth anniversary with a variety of special events, including the world premier of the Videotron, a multimedia system offering 80 hours of films about the Games. A great destination for young people. For information visit [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org)

## U.S.A.

Lots of discounts are available throughout the summer from the folks in **Arizona**. Potential visitors can check out the daily updates at

[www.ArizonaVacationValues.com](http://www.ArizonaVacationValues.com) to find details. An example: book via the web and receive a discount of 30% on three or more nights at the luxurious B&B inn, The Lodge at Sedona, ranked as one of the top 10 B&B's in the United States. The property features Red Rock views, three secluded acres, fountains and sculpture gardens. Rooms normally from US\$160.

Don't leave for **New Orleans** without the Visitors Bureau's *Sizzling Summer Coupon Book* containing over \$1,400 in discount values at the city's hotels, restaurants, shops, attractions, cruises and tours. Specials are available through 1 September 2003. For your copy call 1 800 672 6124 or visit [www.neworleanscvb.com](http://www.neworleanscvb.com)

**Chicago** comes alive with music during the summer months and this year *Play on Chicago: Summer in Chicago 2003* will serve up hotel deals along with the music. If a getaway to the windy city for music and a host of cultural activities appeals, call 1877 CHICAGO for all the details. If ships interest you more than music, Chicago will also appeal this summer for between 30 July and 4 August the largest gathering of tall ships ever to sail together in the Great Lakes will be on display on the shores of Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. For more information on *Tall Ships Chicago 2003* visit [www.tallshipschicago.com](http://www.tallshipschicago.com) or call 312 744 3315.

## Airline News

Commencing 30 May **Air Transat** ([www.airtransat.com](http://www.airtransat.com)) is now offering a direct flight from Toronto to Munich, Germany, departing every Friday evening (Airbus A310) and returning on Saturdays. **Austrianz Airlines** now has a Canada-specific website. Travellers can now go to [www.austrianairlines.ca](http://www.austrianairlines.ca) for access to a range of information, including schedules, packages, services, Aeroplan and Miles & More programmes.

**CanJet Airlines** ([www.canjet.com](http://www.canjet.com)) has launched a customer loyalty programme. Called SmartRewards, the programme offers passengers of the Eastern Canadian, low-fare carrier the opportunity to earn free trips. Travellers that have already registered at CanJet's website are automatically enrolled in the new program, while others who want to register can go to the web site [www.canjet.com](http://www.canjet.com), click the SmartRewards icon or call the Reservations Centre at 1 800 809 7777. Each one-way trip earns 1,000 SmartRewards points and once 6,000 points are earned, customers can redeem those points for a free one-way flight.

**Finnair's** direct summer flights between Toronto and Helsinki (departing Sunday, Tuesdays and Thursdays) will again be offered this year, commencing 17 June until 9 September. 1 800 461 8651 or [www.finnair.com](http://www.finnair.com)

**HMY Airways** ([www.hmyairways.com](http://www.hmyairways.com)) has received its international license and finalized its summer and fall schedule. The new airline will commence a Vancouver-Los Angeles service on 27 June with 9 flights a week. Their daily service between Vancouver and Toronto will commence on 16 June, increasing to 13 weekly flights on 23 June. It's worthwhile checking their special deals from time to time (e.g. children travel free). **Jetsgo** has added six new destinations to its summer line-up: Victoria, Thunder Bay, Saint John, St. John's, Gander and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and Labrador. In addition, the existing routes of Toronto-Halifax, Toronto-Calgary and Toronto-Winnipeg will see more service. In total, Jetsgo will fly to 18 Canadian and two U.S. destinations when its summer schedule begins in June. The first portion of the summer schedule was unveiled recently with the resumption of last year's service to Sydney, N.S., and Stephenville, Nfld., starting May 17. Year-round service to Calgary and Edmonton has also been announced. Summer schedule highlights include four destinations in Newfoundland and non-stop flights to Toronto from seven cities. The bulk of the summer schedule starts June 12, with Toronto-Gander service starting June 13. Remaining routes start between June 21 and 27.

## Cruise News

Those freighter cruises detailed in the newsmagazine from Maris, the freighter cruise people, look to be fascinating travel experiences, but the accommodations usually look rather spartan. Not so if you decide to sail on the 12-passenger *Patricia* as she plies the waters around **southern Britain** engaged in light-house, lightship and navigational buoy maintenance. The *Patricia* is owned and managed by The Corporation of Trinity House, constituted under a Royal Charter granted by Henry VIII in 1514. It is the General Lighthouse Authority for **England, Wales** and the **Channel Islands** and, following a recent change in policy, the Trinity House is now able to offer these unique cruises to the public. The 283 ft., 12 passenger ship, with British officers and crew, is capable of moving lightships and lifting the largest navigational buoys. It also boasts a heliport (or helideck). With scheduled departures from August through to the end of October, the ship is scheduled to carry out work on aids to navigation around the Isle of Wight, through the Solent along the South Coast towards the Dover Strait and the Thames Estuary and from Harwick out to the Goodwin Sands. Passengers are able to view the day-to-day activities this working ship undertakes. There are only occasional shore excursions, but the ship offers office facilities for those who wish to work or stay in touch with the rest of the world. And from the Maris newsletter the accommodations look delightful: full bed, ensuite cabins equipped with satellite TVs, tea- and coffee-making facilities, a trouser press, computer and e-mail links and an ocean view, while the lounge dedicated to the 12 passengers looks as though it is in a gracious home. You can see for yourself if you contact Maris Freighter Cruises (1 800 99 MARIS, [www.freightercruises.com](http://www.freightercruises.com)) and request full details. Participants can choose 7-, 14- or 21-night cruises. Unfortunately all that comes with quite a hefty price tag: from £160 (about C\$360) per person, per night. But for those with a love of all things nautical, rather than a cruise that just moves you from one destination to another, these trips would, I am sure, be memorable.

Cheaper by far is another freighter journey; this one aboard the 12-passenger German container ship *Canada Senator* as she sails from **Montreal** to the **Mediterranean**. The roundtrip, made every month,

takes 28 days, and European ports of call include **Marseille, Genoa, Naples** and **Gioia Tauro**. Single, double and deluxe accommodations all consist of bedrooms with shower and separate sitting rooms.. Single suites cost US\$98 pp per day, double US\$92 and deluxe twin US\$105. Sounds like a great way to spend four weeks! Details from Maris as above.

How about a midsummer Baltic cruise from **Helsinki to Copenhagen**, Bergen, Trondheim and on to **Tromsø** .. the 'Paris of the North'? You'll enjoy magnificent scenery and receive great value for money as the sun will barely disappear! Air-inclusive prices on Finnair from Toronto and full details are available from Baltic Design Tours. Call 1 888 226 3628 or visit [www.kristinacruises.com](http://www.kristinacruises.com) for details.

Single and wish to cruise? How about a river trip in the **United States** this August? RiverBarge Excursions are decreasing its single supplement from 50% to 25% on its August 2003 trips (and on selected trips next year) saving solo travellers about US\$575 per trip. Of course, couples are also welcome on these 'America's Junction' excursions, which include inland trips on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers from St. Louis to Cincinnati, with lots of side trips. For full details call RiverBarge Excursions Lines in New Orleans at 1 888 GOBARGE or visit [www.riverbarge.com](http://www.riverbarge.com)

Windstar has announced a "Sail & Save" promotion, offering cruisers free roundtrip airfare to Tahiti from cities across Canada (Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and Winnipeg). Ports of call on these 7-day cruises include the **Society Island of Raiatea, Huahine, Bora Bora, Moorea** and **Papeete**. The all-inclusive cruise-air fares start at US\$3,351 on selected dates through to December. For the Christmas holidays sailings (19 and 26 December), the airfare is offered at US\$295 per person from all gateways. For more information see your agent, call 1 800 258 SAIL or visit [www.windstarcruises.com](http://www.windstarcruises.com)

Windstar are also offering well-priced November transatlantic packages as they re-position from **Europe (Lisbon)** to the **Caribbean**. Packages include low-cost airfare add-ons and a night in Lisbon etc. Prices start at US\$1,343 for the 14-day voyages. Contact details as above.

*continued from page 11 ...*

ly affordable. Even the superb buffet lunch in the Colombo Hilton will only set you back about US\$12 a head and you'll find interesting restaurants all over the island. The only thing that will make your bill jump is imported alcohol, which carries a 100% tax. Enjoy the local beer or a cocktail made with the Sri Lankan spirit called *arrack*. (And don't forget to sample some of the world's finest teas!)

**Scams:** Pleasant-looking young con-men work the tourist areas in Colombo offering shared *tuk-tuk* rides and personalized tours and then asking an exorbitant price. Make such travel arrangements in your hotel with a recognized taxi company or trishaw driver and always settle on a price beforehand.

**Touts:** The historical sites are wonderful, but at times the trinket sellers are a pest. (Not at all sites, they are kept away from religious ones.) Let's hope that the powers-that-be will soon restrict these merchants to designated areas outside the main sites as in most other tourist centres around the world.

**Photography:** You may take photos of Buddha statues but may not turn your back on them to be included in the photo. If you do, a custodian of the site will blow a whistle and demonstrate your lapse of etiquette. At some sites you may be charged for a video camera.

**SriLankan Airlines** ([www.srilankan.lk](http://www.srilankan.lk), Canadian telephone numbers above) has been the recipient of many awards, including being voted the Best Airline of the Year in Central Asia for the past three years by Skytrax Research of Britian (who also voted their

cabin crew the 'friendliest in the world'), and it's easy to see why; the aircraft are modern, they have an excellent timekeeping record and the service is impeccable. I travelled out in Economy and was up-graded to Business Class on my return. Both were excellent; even in Economy there's a charming menu folder given to travellers listing the three tasty meal choices and all the complimentary drinks. Of course the airline provides excellent links to other Asian destinations (including many to India) as well as Europe for those of you planning a world tour.

**Information:** The High Commission of Sri Lanka is located at 1204 - 333 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON, K1P 1C1, tel: 613 233 8449, [www.srilankahcot-tawa.org](http://www.srilankahcot-tawa.org) (click on 'Links' and you'll find 'Tourism' as the last section).

**Side trip:** Consider taking a trip out to the Maldive Islands while you are in this part of the world. Unfortunately I didn't have time, but I hear they are wonderful. Flights leave regularly from Colombo and arrangements can be made locally.

**Literature:** Sri Lanka will be no stranger to lovers of CanLit; our Sri Lankan/Canadian writers are renowned. Michael Ondaatje's *Running in the Family* and *Anhil's Ghost*, Christopher Ondaatje's *The Maneater of Punani* and Shyam Selvaduri's *Cinnamon Gardens* are all set in Sri Lanka. I've read them all and recommend them highly. And Sri Lanka is the chosen home of British science-fiction writer Sir Arthur C. Clarke, creator of *2001: A Space Odyssey*. 🇨🇪

## The Travel Society

**We have a file listing several single travellers who wish to take a Travel Society tour and wish to share. Destinations include: China, Australia, Turkey and the Galapagos.**

**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 on the telephone - or meet if convenient - to see if you would be compatible.**

**Call 416 926 2500, ex. 24 or 1 877 926 2500, ex. 24**

## It's time to go travelling!

There are so many places in the world and there's so little time. Take a look at these new destinations. We have been asked by our members to arrange tours to the following countries. Why don't you join them?

- South Africa, Botswana, Namibia
- India
- Sri Lanka
- More Australia, New Zealand and Fiji
- Holy week in Guatemala, plus Cuba
- An in-depth Guatemala Tour

Please call now and we will send the detailed itineraries for this fall and 2004

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

*Space limited to 20 people*

## A Traveller's Turkey

Departing: ~~5 September~~ **14 September 2003**

It is one of the cradles of civilization and one of the most wonderful countries on the planet. Here 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 of Turkey exclusively for Travel Society members. It is due to take place in September 2003 for a maximum of 20 people.

We have combined our extensive knowledge with careful research 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.

### 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

## Copper Canyon & Guadalajara

9 days departing 12 September & 10 October 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

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



## Chile, Patagonia and Easter Island

Departing 5 September & 10 October 2003

Come with The Travel Society to one of South America's most popular destinations – Chile. During this 9-day trip you'll spend 5 exciting days touring the historic city of Santiago, visiting some beautiful vineyards and taking excursions to some popular beach destinations. Then you'll fly south to Puerto Montt to discover more history, mingle in the local markets, search out special handicrafts and explore the region's beautiful lakes, waterfalls and rivers.

Add-ons which you won't want to miss are a 5-night trip to Patagonia, romantically called 'South of Silence', where you'll stay in the renowned Termas de Puyuhuapi Hotel & Spa, and/or a 3-night trip to unique Easter Island, where our guides will show you all this incredible destination has to offer.

**Departing from: Toronto Ottawa & Montreal  
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg \$1,698 pp/dbl**  
Single supplement \$744 (Sharing can be arranged.)

**Great add-ons:**

**Easter Island 4 days/3 nights \$ 894 pp/dbl**  
**Patagonia 6 days/5 nights \$1,794 pp/dbl**

**Canadian domestic & international flights additional**  
**All prices are subject to confirmation**  
**Taxes extra.**

**Your tour includes:**

- First-class accommodation
- All transfers
- Meals as per itinerary
- All tours and boat trips
- Local guides
- Domestic air

## The Kingdom of Thailand

17 days departing 20 October 2003

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

"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.

**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

## Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

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

14 days departing 14 October & 4 November 2003

*Each tour is limited to 20 people*

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.

You'll also visit other destinations in Ecuador, and then you can choose to enjoy the exciting optional extensions: to Kapawi - a ecological lodge in the Amazon and/or a visit Machu Picchu in Peru. We'll take care of all the travel details. All you have to do is 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**

Prices are subject to confirmation

**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 (US\$100)

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

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

from \$3,986 for 19 days

## 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*

*9 September, 7 October & 21 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!

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.

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

### 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

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 members and their friends.

# The 25 Day Grand Tour of New Zealand, Australia and Fiji!

*Departure Date: October 22, 2003*

### Highlights...

**Auckland, Waitomo Caves, Rotorua, Agrodome sheep demonstration, Te whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve, Rainbow Springs, Milford Sound cruise, Queenstown, Mount Cook, Christchurch, Sydney, Opera House & Harbour cruise, Tropical Cairns, Michaelmas Cay, Outer Barrier Reef cruise, Kuranda rail & Rainforest, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, The "Ghan" train across the Outback, Adelaide, Melbourne, 3 nights in Fiji**

What could be more wonderful than a 25-day grand tour of New Zealand, Australia and Fiji? No matter where you live in Canada, these destinations are a long way to go ... so come with us and see the highlights in one unforgettable vacation. Our itinerary runs to three pages, so what can we tell you here? Look at the list above and you'll realize this trip covers the highlights of the two safe and welcoming "downunder" countries, ending with three nights in the Pacific island paradise that is Fiji.

### PRICES INCLUDE AIR AND TAXES departing from:

<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>\$10,357</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Victoria</b>	<b>\$10,499</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Calgary &amp; Edmonton</b>	<b>\$10,610</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>\$10,968</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Toronto</b>	<b>\$10,968</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Ottawa &amp; Montreal</b>	<b>\$10,968</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>
<b>Halifax</b>	<b>\$11,049</b>	<b>pp/dbl</b>

Single supplement \$1,999 (Sharing can be arranged.) Taxes extra

### Your tour costs includes:

- Fully comprehensive insurance included
- Exclusive special-interest fun themes
- The services of an experienced escort
- First-class hotels throughout
- Luxury touring coaches
- All tips included
- Full luggage service
- Return trans-Pacific airfare with Qantas Airways
- All sightseeing (with no hidden extras)
- Hotel taxes and Australian and NZ GST.
- The Travel Society neck pillow, flight bag, travel wallet, baggage tags
- 3 nights in Fiji

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

## YOUR DISCOUNT VOUCHER FOR RENEWALS, GIFTS AND NEW MEMBERSHIPS

Don't let my membership run out ...

- please: **RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP** \_\_\_\_\_  
 or **START A NEW MEMBERSHIP** \_\_\_\_\_  
 or **SEND A GIFT MEMBERSHIP** \_\_\_\_\_

*check your discount choice, we will extend your membership from the expiry date:*

- \_\_\_ **3 years** for **\$110.00** - the member rate  
 (a 21% saving off the regular \$140.00)  
 \_\_\_ **2 years** for **\$79.50** - the member rate  
 (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.

Address for **NEW** or **GIFT** memberships only

name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 town: \_\_\_\_\_ prov: \_\_\_\_\_  
 postal code: \_\_\_\_\_ tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
 gift message: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to: *TravelScoop*  
 218-1033 Bay St Toronto ON Canada M5S 3A5  
 Fax: 416 926 0222 e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com

your membership expires on: \_\_\_\_\_  
 (month - year)

**Password:**  
heel