

Travel *Scoop*

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**After Antarctica
Western Isles of Scotland
Discovering Provence**

TravelScoop

The Travel Society Magazine

Editor

Ann Wallace
ann@thetravelsociety.com

Contributors

Carrie Toomey &
Pat Toomey
Helen E. Parson
Vera Howard
Hugh Gaudet

Publisher

Nigel D Raincock
nigel@thetravelsociety.com

Administrator

Debbie Philip
debbie@thetravelsociety.com

Graphic Design & Production

Yong Park
yong@thetravelsociety.com

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Travel Scoop Inc.

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Tel: 416 926 0111 Fax: 416 926 0222

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web-site: www.thetravelsociety.com

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The whale bone arch in Stanley, Falklands

editor's letter ...

Over recent months I have been interested in hearing about tourism trends from Carol McLelan, Vice President of Marketing (North America) for Flight Centre. Carol reports a surge of interest recently in travel to the 10 new EU countries, especially Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia and Estonia. Says Carol, "People are hearing far more about these countries than ever before and are now seriously considering them as alternative European destinations. What people are discovering is that many of these destinations are both extremely affordable as well as unique and the growth potential is considerable."

While those countries may be affordable, the same cannot be said for some of the tourism initiatives being planned for Dubai. Most of us will have to start saving if we fancy a stay in Hydropolis, the world's first underwater hotel, offering 220 rooms with underwater views and a half-submerged concert hall. Access will be by way of a train travelling through a 500-metre Plexiglas tube and the hotel will resemble a giant submarine anchored in the Gulf. The price tag for sleeping with the fish? Up to US\$5,500 per night!

And that's not the only news from Dubai. Lots more record-breaking projects are in the works there. Dubailand, a theme park with a US\$5 billion price tag and a completion date of 2006, is one of the world biggest constructions projects. Comprised of 45 projects, the park will include the world's biggest shopping mall; several five-star hotels, including one built in sand dunes; a sports complex; an artificial rain forest under an enormous glass dome; a ski slope with artificial snow; the largest zoo in the Middle East and lots more. Then there's Buj Dubai, the world's tallest tower, scheduled for completion in 2007, when it will presumably strip the record-breaking title from Toronto's CN Tower. Not forgetting The Palm, two of the world's largest man-made islands, constructed in the shape of date palms, which will offer villas, apartments, hotels, beach resorts and more. After a Dubai visit in the future it sounds as though you'd certainly have a lot to tell your friends. As for me, I think I'd have a lot of explaining to do to my bank manager too!



Okanagan Wine Festivals

Last year, along with two other couples, we spent four days in the Okanagan Valley during October's wine festival. We had such a great time we hope our short story will encourage some other readers to come and join us in October ... we'll be back because all of us ordered wine to be picked up this year, as well as the trunk loads we took home with us last!

While the devastating fires of the summer of 2003 destroyed forest, homes and some vineyards in British Columbia's spectacular Okanagan Valley, they did not dampen the warm welcome given visitors by the entire populace of the Valley during the 23rd Annual Fall Wine Festival held 3 – 12 October 2003. (This year, the dates are 1 – 10

October.) This is the biggest of four wine festivals held in the area each year: Icewine (January), Spring (April/May) and Summer (August) being the other three.

The wine-producing areas of the Valley stretch from Osoyoos in the south to Vernon in the north, a distance of about 140 km that boasts more than 50 wineries – 48 of which participated in last year's fall fest. The sunny, hot days and cool nights of this area's microclimate, together with well-drained sandy soil, provide a winemaker's dream location.

Soon we were off to the wineries for some tastings, because that's what

we came for! From Kelowna or Penticton you can visit more than two dozen, while nearly twenty more can easily be reached from Oliver or Osoyoos in the south. Large-scale, long-established wineries such as Cedar Creek, Summerhill, Mission Hill, Grey Monk and Burrowing Owl greet visitors in tasting rooms commanding splendid



above: Our host, Imre Togyi of Shimmering Lake B&B, in his vineyard harvesting Merlot grapes

left: Shimmering Lake B&B (Gaudet)



views of lakes, vineyards or orchards. We also discovered some smaller, more intimate wineries and tasted some great wines in less splendid surroundings, such as LaFrenz, Red Rooster and Lakeview, where enterprising and imaginative winemakers are making their mark and being recognized for the excellence of their products. Unfortunately we were not able to visit some of the small wineries that are producing some "cult" wines such as Black Hills or Blasted Church. (We loved the names of some of the wineries. Blasted Church is indeed located in an abandoned church.)

Until recent years the pride of the

Okanagan was its white wines such as Pinot Gris, Riesling, Ehrenfelser (a cross of Riesling and Silvaner) and Gewürztraminer – and the whites still account for a great deal of the production. Now, with the help of winemakers from Europe, California and Australia, many wineries here are producing excellent reds such as Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. We tasted several reds from a number of wineries and weren't disappointed. And BC's late harvest and icewines are international darlings at the moment.

During last year's festival there were more than 150 associated events to choose from: everything from multi-course gourmet dinners paired with the wines or a pig roast, to wine appreciation workshops, cooking classes, jazz and chamber music con-

certs, art shows and cruises on Okanagan Lake. For would-be wine experts there's even a People's Choice event where everyone gets a chance to voice an opinion and vote for their favourites. Of course, most of the wineries are open for tours and tastings throughout the year as well as during festival time and

wine, wine paraphernalia, gifts and souvenirs are available for purchase at most of them.

Writers are rewarded for sharing!

TravelScoop rewards readers with subscription extensions of varying lengths for all submissions published. So whether you have a letter with a travel tip or a destination to share, please write to us!

Chefs from across Canada and beyond have been attracted to the Okanagan by the availability of excellent local produce and wines, so there are many first-class restaurants throughout the valley. We chose to attend two wine dinners and were greatly impressed by the quality of all we were offered.

Tired of wine sipping? Is that possible? But we'd like to point out that there are many other attractions and activities to keep visitors to the region occupied. There are water sports on the four lakes in the valley, golf on the many scenic and challenging courses, while art galleries, artisans' studios, museums and heritage sites abound, as well as many local theatre groups and musical companies to keep you entertained in the evenings.

To meet the needs of visitors, accommodations in the region range from multi-star lakeside resorts to cozy B&Bs. We (three couples) stayed at Shimmering Lake B&B near Naramata which overlooks vineyards and the lake. They have three rooms at \$110 per night and can be reached by calling 250 496 5050. Other friends stayed at An English Rose Garden in a residential area of Kelowna where the two rooms cost \$75 or \$85 per night. Telephone 1 877 604 6259. Both properties can be seen at www.bbcanada.com and we can recommend them.

There's much additional help available for planning your visit. For the **Okanagan Wine Festival**

Society call 250 861 6654 or visit www.thewinefestivals.com where there are many details of events, accommodation and a variety of packages. **British Columbia Tourism** can be reached at 1 800 661 2294 for some great guide books or visit www.visitbc.com. **Tourism Kelowna** is at 1 800 663 4345 and the **Association of B.C. Winegrowers** has a site: www.winegrowers.bc.ca

It's a wonderful area for a fall vacation. Cheers!

*Hugh Gaudet
Calgary, AB*

To complement this month's story on Scotland, we thought readers might appreciate these additional accommodation tips from other subscribers who have enjoyed touring in Scotland.

Three Tips for Scotland

Last year we spent a month touring in Scotland: the mainland, the Orkneys, Mull and Iona. Here are our three favourite accommodation tips from that trip.

Our best B&B was Mrs McQueen's 'Latheron' in Oban. Located in a quiet, residential area with off-street parking, we received a warm welcome to this immaculate, spacious and elegant home. All rooms are en suite, the full breakfast was delicious and the property's location provided easy access to the town cen-

tre and the ferries to the Islands of Mull and Iona. Contact Mrs McQueen at Latheron, Longsdale Road, Oban PA34 5JU, tel: (code: 011 44) 1631 564 974, rates £22 dbl. (£1 = approx. C\$2.50.)

We also enjoyed Houstons & Wellington Guest House in Wick, another pleasant and spacious property with en suite rooms in a central location with enclosed parking and a generous full-cooked breakfast (with delicious hot rolls) and a bellman who helped carry our luggage. It's located at 41 High Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 4BS, tel: 1955 603 287, fax 1955 603 237.

We'd also like to recommend Brockies Lodge Hotel where we enjoyed a delicious five-course Sunday dinner which was the best meal we had during our stay in Bonnie Scotland. Then, after touring around in the area on another day, we returned for afternoon tea, only to be told that unfortunately afternoon tea wasn't being served. But ... we were nonetheless provided with a big pot of tea and a large plate of Scottish shortbread in elegant surroundings with lots of smiles. Now that's what we call Scottish Highland hospitality! The proprietors here are Patsy and Donald Ross, Brockies Lodge Hotel, Kiltarlity-by-Beaully, Inverness-shire IV4 7HW, tel: 1463 741 257, fax: 1463 741 258, visit website: www.brockieslodgehotel.co.uk

*Edith, George & Jessie-Eloise Hislop
Edmonton, AB*

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You can renew your subscription on-line too!

An Address in Budapest

Budapest has featured in *TravelScoop* recently, so I'd like to recommend a hotel I know there. It's the elegant yet family-style 3-star City Hotel Pilvax (www.taverna.hu/pilvax). It's a 32-room property located in one of the quietest pedestrian streets in the city, yet just a short stroll from the non-stop buzz of Váci Street plus the cultural and shopping centres of downtown. It is also near the Elizabeth Bridge and a block away from a metro station. The food at the historic Pilvax Restaurant and Brasserie is great too, and the prices are reasonable. There's a terrace for summer dining.

I would recommend if anyone is interested in staying at this hotel that they call or send a fax. Tel: 011 361 266 7660, fax: 361 317 6396. Or, if you prefer to write, the address is City Hotel Pilvax, 1052 Budapest, Pilvas koz 1 – 3, Hungary. The e-mail address is pilvax@taverna.hu but this gets intercepted by an agency and they seem to charge an extra € per day. At least that was my experience. As soon as I received my confirmation with this unexpected charge I cancelled my booking and a Hungarian friend suggested that I fax my dates since in that way my request would go

directly to the hotel. It worked perfectly. Often the web offers several deals and packages.

Incidentally this hotel is connected with the Taverna hotel, which is large and frequented by Americans. Tourists who arrive by car have to go to the Taverna hotel to park their vehicle

*Georgette Jones
Vancouver, BC*

Cruise Dinners

Re Barbara Redlich's note on restaurant charges on the *Queen Mary 2*, I would like to mention that in my experience some other lines also have a smaller, rather exclusive dining room for which one needs to reserve a table and pay an additional fee. They often have music and diners are expected to dress up, usually in evening wear. I believe all the Celebrity cruise ships have this available, certainly the two I've been on have. Apparently many people are finding this quite acceptable as eight Celebrity cruise ships were voted into the top ten of Condé Nast's Gold List!

*Vivien Feirson
Toronto, ON*

Reader to Reader

Help for Africa

The "Bergs" are travelling again this fall and hope *TravelScoop* readers can help us with information and suggestions for our two-month Eastern and Southern Africa adventure.

We plan to fly to Nairobi and take a fourteen-day "Explore" safari. Upon returning to Nairobi it's off to Zanzibar. Then we plan to make our way to Victoria Falls and finally to Cape Town and home.

Suggested itinerary improvements and/or additions would be welcome! Some acceptable budget accommodation suggestions, and whether to fly or take the bus on certain route segments would be helpful too. In addition we would appreciate any information about places visited, accommodation used and activities undertaken. We will also employ previous *TravelScoop* articles and *Lonely Planet* guides as research tools. Many thanks,

John and Doreen Berg
johnndoreenberg@telus.net

P.S. Last fall some readers e-mailed us requesting we share our South American adventure upon our return. We didn't keep the e-mails but asked readers to contact us in February. Some did. However, for those of you who would still like information regarding our budget travels in Peru, Chile, Argentina and Brazil, please e-mail us and we'll respond.

Reader to Reader

Tips for Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, s'il vous plaît!

I enjoyed the May 2004 issue with the Newfoundland articles as a friend and I will be travelling there in late September. The websites are much appreciated.

We are also planning to visit Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. There was information on these islands in the July/August 1997 issue of *TravelScoop* but we are wondering if any readers have been there recently who can give us some updated information. We'd like to have some tips on travelling there by ferry from Newfoundland, some recommended places to stay/eat and the sights to see. We plan to be there for three nights. We have found a website but would like to hear of some personal experiences.

Thanks.

*Johanne Kasha
De Winton, Alberta
e-mail: laloba7@telusplanet.net*

After Antarctica

story by *Carrie Toomey*,
photos by *Carrie and Pat Toomey*

In last month's edition of TravelScoop we brought you details of a Holland-America cruise from Valparaiso, Chile, to Antarctica. As the article came to an end, the m.s. Amsterdam was leaving the frozen continent bound for the Falkland Islands. Here, now, are details of the second half of the journey.



Plaza Independencia, Montevideo, Uruguay

Day 15 – we arrive at the Falklands

On arrival at the Falklands we had to anchor well away from the dock and take tenders to shore. The capital, Stanley, is compact with small houses with pretty gardens and a distinctive whale-bone arch in the centre of town. The island is fairly flat with the curious characteristic “stone runs”, peat bogs and heaving fenced mine fields. A few trees have been planted in sheltered spots and sheep farming is the only agricultural activity. My husband Pat and I took an excellent tour to Long Island Farm (US\$89 each). There we watched a peat-cutting demonstration and other farm activities before being invited into the small farmhouse for tea and home-made cakes. Peat is used for heating and the farmer’s wife uses a goose wing to brush up the peat dust around the fire. On returning to Stanley we had a pleasant lunch at The Falklands Brasserie, run by a Chilean family. We were to discover that the Falklanders look to Britain and Chile for all their needs, not Argentina.

Day 16 – New Year’s Day

A new year welcomed at sea and another lecture day for me. John Splettstoesser talked about the stone runs of the Falklands and its geology and my husband gave his second lecture about Antarctica. In the evening we enjoyed a concert by a harmonica virtuoso named Bernie Fields, followed by an enthusiastic show put on by the Filipino crew.

Day 17

Another day at sea as we headed towards Buenos Aires. Graham Sunderland gave a lecture on Montevideo, Uruguay, which we will reach in a couple of days. In the evening, at the invitation of some new friends from the States, we joined them for dinner in the Pinnacle Grill (for a surcharge of US\$20 pp) where the food was definitely gourmet and beautifully served and presented. Later there was an evening concert.

Day 18 – Buenos Aires

We arrived in Buenos Aires and, as we know the city quite well from an earlier visit, we took the free shuttle bus into town to explore further on our own. We walked along the Avenida Florida to Plaza de Mayo and the Casa Rosada, looking at the headscarves of the grandmothers of those who have 'disappeared' still painted on the ground of the Plaza. The city seemed to have deteriorated in the three years since we were there. It's still an elegant, European-style city, but we noticed more homeless people, more beggars and some very small children playing accordions for any money they can get. What we did enjoy was seeing a few of the city's famous dog-walkers ... up to 15 dogs being exercised on leashes by one person! We also noticed there are many more guards around and the foreign banks are boarded up. Taxis are plentiful and not expensive.

We went into the famous Café Tortoni, a traditional coffee shop founded in 1858, with its marble floors and table tops, photos of world leaders and film stars who have visited and other memorabilia. We then walked through some of the familiar streets, bought some excellently-priced, well-made shoes and stopped for a beer and a spicy omelette under the canopy of the Confeiteria "My House" on Avenida Cordoba.

Later, back on the ship, a special gaucho show was brought aboard which included a lively tango demonstration. This was a family group specializing in presenting authentic dance to Argentinians and we were fortunate to be able to see them.

Day 18 – Montevideo

We arrived in Montevideo a little late as we had to wait for a berth. We had booked the Vineyards of Juanico tour for US\$129 each, which turned out to be an excellent day's excursion.

The port area of Montevideo seemed very run down and dirty, but at the beginning of our tour we were taken up to the Plaza Independencia where there are grand old buildings and a huge mausoleum to the local hero – Jose Gervasio Artigas. There are 33 palm trees planted in the square to represent the 33 independence heroes. A pale cream building here used to be the seat of government, but these offices have now been moved to a new Legislative Palace, a very grandiose building in an extensive open area away from the older part of the city. Inside there is considerable use of beautiful marble in various colours and patterns, as well as large paintings and a ceiling of red and gold geometric patterns. After enjoying a glimpse of this building we headed out into the countryside (rather flat) and on to the Juanico Winery, a large estate with lush fields under vine with evergreens to cut the wind. Glasses of the winery's champagne were followed by a visit to the vineyards and the cellars, with explanations, and then it was time for lunch with tastings of the various wines, both red and white. All excellent.

Day 19 – at sea

A day at sea with lectures if you wished. I enjoyed Graham Sunderland's talk on Rio de Janeiro and then sat in for a while on a talk on emeralds, which I left once I heard the prices they were talking about! For Pat there was a question and answer meeting in the Crows Nest Lounge. In addition there were all sorts of special sales and demonstrations (food and flower decorating) going on. Dr Justin Miller gave another musical talk and in the evening there was a concert of classical music by Junko Kobayashi.



Cutting peat in the Falklands

Day 20 – at sea

Yes another day at sea. I have been walking on the promenade deck every day getting fresh air, exercise (3.5 circuits equal a mile) and watching the bird life and flying fish that are now visible as we head further north. There was a late-night message on the public address system from Captain Peter Harris stating that Brazilian Immigration and Security would come on board prior to Rio and that we must be processed individually with our passports.

Day 21 – Rio de Janeiro

There was a pink sky as we headed into Rio, being buzzed by helicopters. Then Sugarloaf, the city and the huge figure of Christ on the distant Corcovado appeared out of the early morning mist. Rio, snaking between rock pinnacles and mountains, certainly has a dramatic setting.

Before disembarking we had to line up to get our passports. Then the Americans were separated from the rest of us. They then had to wait while the other nationalities, including Canadians, were processed with a stamp in our passports. The U.S. citizens were then photographed and had their fingerprints taken with those old-style ink pads. This is Brazil's reply to the indignities accorded to their nationals on entering Miami.

Finally our tour started about two hours late. We had booked the Corcovado and City Tour for US\$39 each. First things we noticed were a lot of graffiti and a lot of security personnel too. Rio seems a lot less European than Buenos Aires; it is ethnically diverse and seems very vigorous. We had timed tickets for the busy, two-car funicular to the Cristo Redentor on the top of the Corcovado Rock, so it wasn't long before we were on our way through the forest park to the station at the top for wonderful views over Rio in all directions. There is an elevator up to the base of the great statue.

Our tour then took us back through the city, where we stopped at the modern cathedral shaped like a volcano; a very plain building, rather ugly I thought, but huge inside with seating for 5,000 and immense stained glass windows on four sides and light coming through the top of the building via a cross-shaped window in the roof. Then it was back to the ship where we were happy to spend the rest of the day on board.

Day 22 – back into Rio

We walked into the Centro part of the city close to where we were docked. This is a very busy area with some grand old buildings. We couldn't help noticing police cars parked at strategic locations and even a group of riot police. There are street vendors everywhere and plenty of trees. But there seemed to be no coffee shops, only stand-up coffee bars, but we eventually found an open-air restaurant close to the Teatro Municipal where we refreshed ourselves with a Portuguese beer. Later we found a pleasant restaurant called Pier 22, where no-one spoke English, but where we were able to get a very nice, inexpensive vegetarian lunch.

Day 23 – time to leave

We walked ashore again during the morning and explored another corner of the city, before returning to the ship to relax before leaving in the evening. I won't go into detail about my travails getting to Miami, but I will say that I was not impressed with Miami airport with their

unfriendly security guards, nor with American Airlines, whose staff seemed stressed and who, I was horrified to see, pulled out seats for take off and landing which blocked the passageways, sitting back to back, with no possible way around them. I was thankful to eventually be on my way to Toronto with Air Canada in a clean, modern plane with edible food and polite staff. When travelling to South America, avoid Miami and American Airlines if you can.

I was, of course, happy to be home after such a long day, but the cruises around South America and to Antarctica had been a wonderful experience and we are certainly considering returning to Chile one day. All highly recommended. 🇧🇷



That famous beach in Rio

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Hop-scotching Around the Western Isles of Scotland

story and photos by Helen E. Parson



As our Air Canada transatlantic flight neared its destination, the Captain announced that we were passing over Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides before proceeding south to Glasgow. What we got on the approach to Glasgow was a glorious early morning view of many of the western isles of Scotland. It was perfectly clear, not a cloud anywhere ...we were off to a good start! We had talked about this trip for years and had spent considerable time planning the details. We had previously travelled throughout the Scottish mainland but this time we were here to visit those western isles.

But which ones? The ferry company, Caledonian MacBrayne (better known as Cal-Mac), serves over 20 islands, some large, some tiny. We poured over the Cal-Mac timetable and literature which arrived by mail within three days of our phone request; we talked to Scottish friends and studied both Lonely Planet's *Scotland's Highlands & Islands* and *The Rough Guide to Scottish Highlands & Islands*. In the end we selected the islands of Arran,

Islay ('eye-la'), Skye, Harris and Lewis for their variety of landscapes and we booked (again by phone) two of Cal-Mac's "Island Hopscotch" routes to get us and our rental car out to them. The hopscotch routes are designed for travellers, not commuters. Most of these routes include more than one island and they keep moving you forward. While ferry travel with a car is expensive, the hopscotch fares are a bargain compared to cumulative single-crossing costs of the routes they cover.

When should we go? In addition to constraints posed by ferry and flight schedules in selecting our travel days, there were a couple of other factors to bear in mind: we wanted to be on Islay on a weekday so that we could take a distillery tour, and it appeared necessary to avoid Harris and Lewis on a Sunday. The guide books warned that because strict Presbyterianism, in a variety of forms, predominates out there everything is closed on Sundays. (Apparently even the playground swings are locked up!)

We flew to Glasgow on a Friday in the latter half of September and picked up the rental car that our travel agent had booked through National and that we had prepaid in Canadian dollars. We had reserved a compact car with a manual transmission and no air conditioning. The car turned out to be a Vauxhall Astra, which was comfortable, roomy enough for two people with luggage and a suitable size for the single track roads and hair-pin bends that we encountered on this trip. When we had purchased our hopscotch ferry tickets we had also booked space on the particular crossings that we wanted so our trip schedule was set. We and our Astra were due at Ardrossan southwest of Glasgow for the first of our seven ferry crossings on the day following our Glasgow arrival.

What we had not pre-booked, with one exception, was accommodation. We planned to stay in B&Bs and did check to see how numerous they were on the various islands. Since we were travelling past the height of the tourist season, we thought we would not have difficulty in getting accommodation and, for the most part, this turned out to be true. However, we did take accommodation information with us in addition to what was in our guide books. Before departure we had collected relevant details about suitable-sounding B&Bs in locations where we expected to stay from the very useful web site of the Scottish Tourist Board www.visitscotland.com. The accommodation information on this site gives not only the details of the room, its price and star rating, but also has maps that precisely locate the property. We printed the map page, found by following the link for "directions",

and wrote the other relevant details on it. We also figured that, should we get stuck, we would use the booking service provided by the Tourist Information Offices in most main centres. Be warned, however, that in Scotland there is a £3.00 (£1.00 = \$2.50) non refundable fee for having a Tourist Office book your accommodation.

The only island for which we pre-booked our accommodation was Islay, where B&Bs are not numerous. Here we selected what turned out to be an excellent farmhouse B&B (three star) from the visitscotland web site and booked directly with the host by e-mail. Elsewhere, finding accommodation was not a problem although we were pleased we had taken relevant information with us as it proved very useful. We did not

have to use the Tourist Office booking service. Travelling in September resulted in a slightly lower room rate than that charged in summer and we paid between £18 and £23 per person, per night for excellent, mainly en suite rooms and as much breakfast as we could eat. Most of these had three or four star ratings although we are convinced that the only difference between three and four stars is a box of Kleenex and more mirrors! (Also we stayed in places that were not rated where the facilities were just as good.) Once our hosts realized that we were from Canada a conversation always ensued. Everyone seemed to have relatives or friends here (Alberta being very popular); had been here recently or were booked to come shortly!

We spent our first night in Dumbarton a few miles northwest of Glasgow Airport on the north bank of the River Clyde. From here it was an easy half hour train ride into central Glasgow for a little sight-seeing in the continuing bright sunshine of our arrival day. The next day, with a little time before our noon ferry departure to the Isle of Arran, we drove the long route to Ardrossan by following the south shore of the Clyde through the old shipbuilding and port centre of Greenock and then down the coast to the resort town of Largs and onto the ferry terminal at Ardrossan. Arran, the most southern of Scotland's western islands, is a popular get-away destination for residents of Glasgow who have the option of taking the train directly to the ferry terminal from the Glasgow Central station. The ferry trip from Ardrossan to Broddick on Arran is just under an hour, meaning that one can reach the island in just over two hours from the centre of the city. However the island, with its fascinating landscape variety (and its abundant accommodation), is able to absorb large numbers of visitors.

Arran, often aptly described as "Scotland in miniature" – rugged highlands in the north, gentler, more rolling pas-



The western isles of Scotland that we visited

toral land in the south – is split in two, like the rest of the country, by the Highland Fault Boundary. Arran’s geological significance is considerable and it attracts many university and school field trips to study the amazing variety of rock formations. At about 20 miles long by 10 wide the island boasts a range of activities and attractions including hiking, cycling (watch out for the cyclists determined to do the complete round-island road loop), golf (seven courses) and a number of significant cultural features. For example, on the west side of the island the wide expanse of Machrie Moor was of particular significance to Bronze Age inhabitants. Six stone circles, marking 4,000 year old burial sites, have been discovered here, the most impressive being a circle of three standing stones 18 feet in height right in the middle of the moor.

After two enchanting sunny days in which we drove all the roads and walked some of the trails, we left Arran on the small ferry that crosses from the small town of Lochranza at the northern end of the island to the Kintyre peninsula, a half hour run (April to October only). There were only eight vehicles on board; one of them occupied by another Ontario couple! On the other side of the narrow Kintyre peninsula at Kennacraig we boarded the much larger *Hebridean Isles* for the two hour crossing to Port Askaig on the northeast coast of Islay. This ferry was fairly full with a large number of commercial vehicles on board and, like all we sailed on, was unbelievably punctual – they all left and arrived exactly according to the schedule.

To reach Port Askaig, the ferry sails up the relatively narrow Sound of Islay that separates Islay from the Isle of Jura. It was sunny, clear, cold, and windy to the point that standing on the open deck at the front of the ferry – if you could manage to fight your way there against the gale – was painful. The views of the purple hills on Jura were, however, spectacular. Our initial reaction to Islay, as we drove out of Port Askaig (not much more than a ferry dock), was slight dismay but this was only temporary “landscape shock” because of the complete change from Arran. Islay is totally charming but in a completely different way from Arran. Much of it is flat peat bog with some higher ground in the southeast and spectacular sand beaches in the northwest. The land is green, much of it in agriculture, and no matter where we looked we could see for great distances. Almost all buildings on Islay are white and look crisp and clean on the wide-open landscape. The villages are all neat, attractive and again all white although some

buildings have brightly contrasting window frames. White buildings were so pervasive that we asked if there was a bylaw requiring this – no, just tradition, we were told.

Two main attractions bring people to Islay – birds and whisky. The island is a bird watcher’s paradise. Thousands of Greenland geese and other water birds spend the winter here and the island is home to the rare choughs that nest along the cliffs on the west side where they survive by eating insects and larvae. Choughs are large black birds, members of the crow family, with long curving red bills and red feet. They are a spectacular sight. Other than its bird life, Islay is also renowned for its distinctive peaty whisky. Whereas Arran has seven golf courses, Islay has seven distilleries, all of which give tours. Many whisky connoisseurs come to Islay and tour all seven! We only had time for one and chose Laphroaig because my husband, having filled out an application that came attached to a bottle of their malt



top: Standing stones on Machrie Moor, Isle of Arran



left: The Black Cuillin of Skye



bottom: Highland cow with calf, an unexpected traffic hazard on Skye



top: Port Ellen, Isle of Islay

right: Broch ruin, Isle of Lewis

bottom: Stonoway, Isle of Lewis



purchased in Waterloo, Ontario, was an official “friend of Laphroaig” and proud owner of one square foot of Islay peat bog! “Friends” who actually show up at the distillery receive “rent” for their land – a miniature of Laphroaig’s 10 year old product. Some people will go a long way for a drink! As we left the distillery, warmed by the generous tasting that concluded the tour, we passed a number of our tour mates who were walking down the road to tour the next distillery, Lagavulin. However, the sun was still shining and we were determined to hike the west shoreline and find those choughs. We did.

We left Islay by ferry from Port Ellen at the southern end of the island for the return trip to the mainland and the completion of our first “hopscotch” route. Our next hopscotch route started in Mallaig, a port west of Fort William and so we headed north. The drive to Fort William took about four hours and followed the very scenic lochs that

stretch along the west side of the Scottish mainland. We stayed overnight near Fort William and that night, for the only time on this trip, it rained cats and dogs. But by morning the rain had stopped and by the time we reached Skye the sun was back.

Mallaig is a good hour’s drive from Fort William. On a previous trip, some years ago, we had driven out from Fort William to see Mallaig and thought we would never get there. Parts of the route were extremely twisty, slow, with limited visibility through dense forest. Then

our return trip back to Fort William seemed to only take about 20 minutes! Ever since then we have referred to those situations when it seems to take six times as long to reach a place as it does to get back, as “the Road-to-Mallaig” effect. This time we found the road to Mallaig much as we remembered although the last few miles have been upgraded. We actually arrived in time to catch an earlier ferry than the one we had booked and so left

at 10 a.m. for the 20 minute crossing to Armadale.

Skye is an idyllic place, at least when the sun shines and few tourists are about. It is relatively large, 50 miles end to end, with a deeply indented coastline around its four major peninsulas. It has an amazing range of landscapes from the dramatic Cuillin and other uplands to prairie-like moorlands to the spectacular sea cliffs. It is best enjoyed up close and on foot. The Black Cuillin Ridge, the eroded remnant of ancient volcanoes, is Skye’s signature, only eight miles long but containing 12 peaks that exceed 3,000 feet. In clear weather, it can be seen from all over the island.

We arrived on Skye Friday morning and left Monday afternoon. We spent the first night in the village of Broadford to be accessible to the Cuillin. Concerned that our weather luck simply could not last, as soon as we had our room settled we sped down to small coastal community of Elgol for what is reputedly the very best view of the Black Cuillin. It was well worth the 14 miles of single track road over which the sheep wander at will. Here one sees the mountains across the bay and, with the afternoon sun in just the right position, the view was dramatic. On our return from Elgol to Broadford we were stopped by a highland cow with calf that had parked herself in the middle of the road and absolutely refused to budge. We shouted, waved, approached gingerly with the car ... but she was staying put. Eventually we crept by her mere millimetres from her impressive horns and the same distance from the squelchy

peat found immediately off the pavement. She placidly kept on chewing her cud!

Single track roads are common throughout the western isles and there is a protocol to driving them. Passing places are frequent and as two cars approach, the one closest to the passing place stops either after pulling into the passing place if it is on the driver's left or on the road beside the passing place if it is on the driver's right (remember, one drives on the left). In the first case the oncoming driver goes straight ahead along the road; in the second case the oncoming driver drives through the passing place to get around the stopped car. A brief wave on the part of the driver with the right of way acknowledging the one who stopped also appears mandatory. We understand from the local press that gridlock – exacerbated by many drivers unfamiliar with these rules – is common on these roads during the prime June to August tourist season.

Sheep, which are everywhere and rarely fenced, know no rules, road or otherwise. Watch out for them if you are driving. When the farmers need to move their sheep, they use sheep dogs. Unexpectedly, we twice came upon farmers moving their sheep, once on northern Skye, once on Lewis. In both cases their method was the same. The farmers controlled the dogs' actions through a combination of shouted verbal commands – in Gaelic – and hand signals. It is impressive how hard those dogs work and how enthusiastic they seem to be about it all. The manager of a sheepskin outlet told us that he gets a couple more working years out of his dogs if he gives them old sheepskins to sleep on, seems to help keep their joints from seizing up. Wonder if this works for people?

Our second day on Skye we moved on to Portree, a more central location from which to explore the northern and western parts of the island. Portree is an attractive town and fishing port and, with a population of about 2,500, is the only community of any size on Skye. Tourism is a very important part of its economic base and it boasts a great range of abundant accommodation. We spent two nights at a guest house (like a B&B but with more rooms) around the bay from the central part of Portree with a great view of the town from the outside deck and an excellent view over the water from our room.

Food costs can quickly add up on a trip such as this. However, we managed to both eat well and keep our costs under control. Each morning after breakfast we found the local grocery store and bakery and purchased supplies for a picnic lunch (we had some basic cutlery with us). This also had the advantage that we could eat wherever we were which was usually well removed from any kind of eating establishment. Then in the evening, with few exceptions, we had dinner in a local pub (we would ask our B&B host for a recommendation) where main courses generally ran between £6 and £9. Add two pints of beer to this and our dinner bill routinely came to ± £20. On one of the nights we were in Portree we went to the very elegant Cuillins Bay Hotel

where we had an excellent meal at a table in the bar with a superb view out over the bay. Be wary of restaurants with white table cloths, however, as many charge outrageously.

The day we left Skye there were a few morning showers. However, as we crossed to the Isle of Harris the sky cleared and the sun returned, highlighting an unexpected view as we approached land – no more the green of Skye but now bare rock. Harris and Lewis is one island with an old clan line marking the boundary. South Harris, the small, squeezed-off southwestern portion of the island, is unbelievably rocky and inhospitable. The "Golden Road", so called because of the expense of its construction, twists along eastern shore south of South Harris through a moonscape. It was to this area that crofters were relocated when evicted from the slightly more hospitable western shore to make way for sheep, although one would wonder how they managed to survive. The western shore of South Harris has some stunning beaches backed by fertile machair – sand-enriched coastal grasslands, the sand being up to 90 percent shell.

In contrast to South Harris, much of Lewis is fairly level moorland and peat bog. Villages on the northwest coast of Lewis are bleak and drab with many abandoned buildings and large dour churches (no stained glass). Peat is still burned for heat and one frequently sees the peat pile in the yard behind the house. Most visitors drive to the most northerly point of land on Lewis to see the lighthouse and the high sheer coastal cliffs known as the Butt of Lewis, *Rubha Robhanais*, in Gaelic.

The peat bogs of Lewis are home to very dramatic prehistoric sites, the Callanish standing stones (illustrated on p. 9) being the most significant. Arguments continue about the origin and meaning of the stones although it is agreed that the roughly 50 stones were put in place at different times and that the site dates to between 3000 BC and 1500 BC. Visiting Callanish is easy as it is located beside a main road and has an interpretive centre, marked paths and abundant parking. There are a number of other smaller stone circles nearby but seeing them involves hiking through the peat, akin to walking on a wet sponge. In the area, one also finds ruined



A Cal-Mac ferry at Ullapool

brochs, well fortified, circular family houses dating from between 100 BC and 100 AD; these are relatively numerous along Scotland's Atlantic coast. The restored Blackhouse Village Museum of Gairrannan is another impressive cultural site. Blackhouses were the traditional dwellings of crofters and their animals – thatched roof, earth floor, peat fire, no windows. The original buildings at Gairrannan were occupied until 1973.

Stornoway, in contrast to many of the villages on Lewis, is an attractive, thriving coastal town of about 8,000. After the wide-open expanse of the rest of the island, the big surprise driving into Stornoway was the trees, lots of them! Much of the economic base for the island is centred here and it is here that the effort to promote Gaelic is particularly evident although all over the island you encounter Gaelic road signs. In Stornoway all street signs are in Gaelic, with a very tiny English version below. This makes finding your way around town a bit awkward if using the English street map that the Stornoway Tourist Office distributes. We were in Stornoway at the very beginning of October and some B&Bs and tourist-oriented activities were already closed for the season. The Harris Tweed demonstration at the Lewis Loom Centre was one of these, but the proprietor who runs the demonstrations was more than happy to talk to us and to show us around the chaotic shop that is associated with the centre.

We left Stornoway on another very punctual ferry for the 2 ¾ hour run to Ullapool on the northern coast of the Scottish mainland, the longest of all our crossings. Loaded into the car deck just ahead of us were two very large livestock trucks full of sheep (there are no abattoirs on the islands) and the Navy's bomb disposal unit. Fortunately we all had a smooth crossing. The fact that this really was the end of the season was very clear in Ullapool, a quaint little coastal community. Houses along the streets adjacent to and near the waterfront are almost all in the B&B business but a good half of these had already closed for the winter. However, we still had a wide selection from which to choose.

The next day in continuing sunshine we drove from Ullapool back to Dumbarton via Inverness following a beautiful route that took us along Loch Tay and Loch Lomond. We had gone on this trip expecting and prepared for rain but instead we got the kind of weather one hopes for in a Canadian fall – sunny and cool with daytime highs of usually 15° C. We had also expected that the distance we would drive in total would not be that great. We misjudged. Over the two weeks we put about 1,300 miles (2,100 km) on our rental car, significant only because the price of gas ranged between 76 and 91 pence (\$1.70 - \$2.05) a litre! Fortunately the Astra was quite fuel efficient. (*Editor's note: on a recent visit to Britain I rented a GM turbo diesel vehicle and found it very fuel efficient ... a good tip for the UK where gas prices are so high, though diesel is not as pricey.*)

It was a fabulous trip. We would go back to all of these islands again ... but then again there are many other islands out there and we heard good things about them as well.

If you go...

- **Caledonian MacBrayne** runs the extensive ferry network that serves Scotland's west coast. Some crossings have multiple sailings each day; other crossings have less frequent service. There are no sailings to or from Harris and Lewis on Sundays. In addition to single crossing tickets, Cal-Mac also offers "Island Rover" and 26 different "Island Hopscotch" tickets designed for travellers. For our trip we purchased two "hopscotch" tickets: No. 16 covering Arran and Islay; and No. 13 for Skye, Harris and Lewis. In addition to purchasing the hopscotch ticket, it is also advisable to reserve space on the particular crossings you want, particularly if you are travelling at a high demand time of the year with a car. Even in late September some of the ferries we sailed on had a full vehicle load – there is considerable commercial traffic on these runs. For our car and the two of us the total cost of the two hopscotch tickets was £308.70 (just over \$700). We booked 10 weeks before leaving home and had no problem getting the crossings we wanted. We dealt with Cal Mac directly by phone at (011 44) 8705 650 000 and found them to be very efficient. Alternatively, bookings can also be made online. The ferries are all modern, clean, and, in our experience, very punctual. For additional information see www.calmac.co.uk

- **Car rental**, like all transportation in the United Kingdom, is expensive. Our compact rental was booked by our travel agent through National and we paid C\$613 for the two weeks. The only additional charge, and we knew about this, was for the road license and airport fee which is assessed locally. This came to an additional £35 (about C\$86). We charged the car to a gold credit card and used this to cover the CDW. Our travel agent advised us that we should check with our credit card company, CIBC, to be sure the insurance would apply during the ferry crossings. We were told by them that a rental car is covered while crossing on a scheduled ferry service. We faced no problems declining the CDW when we filled out the forms upon picking the car up at Glasgow Airport.

- **Getting around** on the islands in the off season is easy. All roads are paved and traffic is light. However, be warned, many of the roads are single track and shoulders simply do not exist. While the road network on the islands is fairly simple, nevertheless, a road atlas or good map is necessary. We used the 1996 version of the *Bartholomew Road Atlas* (three miles to the inch) and found it just fine. (We also have a 1992 version of the *Ordinance Survey Motoring Atlas of Great Britain*, which is by far our first choice but in spite of looking high and low through UK bookstores we could not find a more up-to-date version.)

- **The islands all have web sites** and tourism is extremely important to their economies. The web sites are a great way to get a feel for the islands, see pictures of some of the scenery and determine what opportunities there are for you. For Arran see www.visitarran.net; Islay www.isle-of-islay.com; Skye www.skye.co.uk; Harris and Lewis

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Welcome to the Sunflower Residence

Discovering Provence ... in a Little Blue Car

story and photos by Vera Howard

Our first visit to France took place 27 years ago, and ever since then we've been promising ourselves we'd return. Then, late last summer, we noticed a very small advertisement in *The Globe and Mail*, with a Toronto phone number, offering a little house for rent in Provence. It all sounded perfect and we booked a two-week stay for October. Our return was arranged!

A few weeks later we flew to Paris for three days and then took the fast TGV train south to Montélimar. This was our first experience with the French rail system, and we were impressed by the comfort and speed of the bullet-nosed TGV train. Two hours and twenty minutes after boarding at the Gare de Lyon, we rolled into the small station at Montélimar and within minutes a friendly clerk at the AVIS desk had us on our way in a sporty, manual, baby-blue, 4-door Citroen ... small and just what is required on many of the narrow roads of the region. The owner of our rental house had sent specific directions on how to find it and we were there in under half an hour.

The owner, Mrs Ulrike Wanié, was there to greet us and to introduce us to what was to be our home for the next two weeks. Her own house actually adjoined 'ours', on the other side of a two-foot thick stone wall. Always friendly and helpful, she was ready to answer our questions and offer advice on where and how to explore, make reservations and in general act as our 'mother hen' if needed.

It is Ulrike's tradition to invite her guests for dinner on the night of their arrival, and we were happy to accept, along with another couple from Toronto who were staying in her second, larger property and who had arrived that day too. Ulrike is a gourmet cook and she produced a beautiful dinner: a traditional Provencal *daube* (a fragrant beef stew), fresh local chesses and fresh pears poached in red wine, all served with different local wines. What a delightful evening and what a terrific start to our holiday.

Now I must go into some detail as I attempt to describe both our house and its location, as they were the highlights around which our enjoyment of the ensuing two weeks took place.

Our little hamlet, Châteauneuf de Mazenc, is located in the less touristy northern region of Provence called La Drome Provencale. It lies a considerable distance from the better-know areas near the Mediterranean. Châteauneuf (new castle) de Mazenc (houses), with a history dating back beyond a castle in the 1200's to Celtic times, is a collection of mellow stone buildings and scenic ruins scattered up a steep hillside on a high point of land providing a panoramic view of patchwork fertile fields leading to the Ardèche Mountains in the distance. About a kilometre away is La Begude de Mazenc, a small commercial centre for groceries and other necessities.

Our house was cheerfully named The Sunflower Residence, and it charmed us from the beginning. The old exterior stones had been restored to their original medieval look and inside there was definitely an aura of history from the antique furnishings and architectural details such as ancient wooden beams. But that's where the old ended and the new began. The large, eat-in kitchen had ceramic-tile countertops and was equipped with a full range of modern appliances (including that all-important dishwasher!). The mirrored bathroom had a huge tiled walk-in shower. The sitting room offered a big table – perfect for pouring over maps and guide books – several comfortable chairs and couches with good lamps for reading. French doors led from there onto a stone *terrasse* from which we had glorious, uninterrupted views to the distant Ardèches. The bedroom had twin beds with matching linens, a large antique wardrobe and dresser. Every room was hung with an eclectic collection of art and the décor was like sunny Provence itself: walls of rich yellow with cushions, curtains and tablecloths in bright yellow, blues and greens; fresh flowers in ceramic vases and multi-coloured rugs scattered on stone floors. But note! There was no TV, VCR, radio or CD player ... so the unique sounds of silence pervaded.

When we stepped outside we entered a different world. The romance of ancient history was all around us. Cobblestone paths led up and down, through narrow lanes, past an ancient church, the remains of walls, arches and medieval buildings or perfectly restored houses and gardens all in their fall splendour. Many of the houses are used as week-end retreats, although there are also some permanent residents. One of the larger buildings is now an international French-language academy. There are a few artisans with *ateliers* in the little lanes and one very tiny café where the food was absolutely delicious. That was as commercial as the village got!

So, how did we spend our two weeks? Well, we always had breakfast at home. Then we often ate a large lunch in the early afternoon while out exploring. The old tradition of literally every shop, museum or business closing at noon for two to three hours still holds here and, since we were usually too far away to come home for siesta like the locals, we spent some of that time being educated in the delicious cuisine of the area. Later, we would shop for cheese, bread, olives, fruit and wine, and that would be our light evening meal, though on several evenings we did go out to very fine restaurants in nearby towns.

We went exploring every day. We put 1600 km on our little blue Citroen as we searched out scenic drives, which usually meant mountain roads with S-bends. We discovered tiny villages and larger towns, found Roman ruins, toured historic chateaux, enjoyed a museum devoted to the history of the production of silk, explored the famous regions that produce Châteauneuf du Pape and Côtes du Rhone wines and, of course, did some tasting. We enjoyed picnics in sunny churchyards. We shopped in outdoor markets and sat in the sun in small cafés. We spent a whole day driving the uniquely engineered road along the Gorges of the Ardèche River with its inspiring scenery. Montélimar is famous for its nougat candy, so we toured a factory and did a tasting there too. We walked the grounds of an old Abbey and shopped in their store for products made by the monks from the lavender of the region,

where it is a major crop. We made an overnight trip to Arles to explore its historic attachment to Vincent Van Gogh. And, because we were late in the season, we enjoyed all this almost tourist-free.

Back home in Canada we considered how we would remember Provence. Would it be the bald, rocky scenery and tortuous roads which our little blue car managed so efficiently? The busy outdoor markets with the happy babble of voices? The acres of hillside vines? The Roman ruins that lie in so many places? The *pâtisseries* where cakes and tarts are displayed with the artistry of a jewellery shop? Lunch in the Van Gogh Café? The sun on the mellow old stone walls of a Crusader castle? Although all these things, and many more, are woven together into a colourful quilt of recollections, they are overlaid by the golden memories of our little Sunflower Residence and the palpable feeling of stepping into ages long past in the cobbled lanes of Châteauneuf de Mazenc. It is they that will always be the essence of Provence to us.



Take a step back in time in Châteauneuf de Mazenc

... continued on page 20

There's lots happening in Canada this summer. Here's just a sampling. Don't forget to contact local tourist offices for their Calendars of Events and lots more information.

Victoria, B.C.'s famous Butchart Gardens is celebrating 100 years in bloom this year with a variety of festivities: thousands of night-time illuminations (until 15 September), musical entertainments, fireworks, totem pole carving and more. If Victoria is in your plans, call 1 866 652 4422 or visit www.butchartgardens.com to choose a date to visit.

Visiting **Vancouver** this summer? If so, you may like to know about **Harbour Cruises & Events**, a company that offers luncheon and sunset dinner cruises. Options include cruises through Vancouver's Inner Harbour and then north to the spectacular and secluded area known as Indian Arm, and a Bowen Island Excursion that includes a gourmet picnic lunch on the island. They sound like a great addition to a Vancouver itinerary. Information from 604 688 7246 or www.boatcruises.com And while in Vancouver plan to visit the **Capilano Suspension Bridge** and discover their exciting **Treetops Adventure** which opened last month. Admission to both sites \$21.95 or less. More information – and a \$1 discount coupon – at www.capbridge.com or call 604 985 7474.

Calgary's Glenbow Museum is inviting visitors to retrace the legendary history of the Canadian West through the eyes of two great American artists – Charles M. Russell and Frederic Remington – in a major exhibition devoted to bringing together the art and stories of the Canadian western frontier. The exhibition has already opened and will run until 11 October. For more information on the Glenbow, western Canada's largest museum, and the **Capturing Western Legends** exhibition, visit www.glenbow.org Admission \$14 or less.

Toronto's Textile Museum of Canada is a gem that is often overlooked by visitors. Yet many locals love this small, but smart, gallery's ever-changing exhibitions that celebrate a wide variety of textiles, from Inuit appliquéd wall-hangings to South African beadwork. This summer (7 July – 5 September) drop by to celebrate African history, culture and art in an exhibition entitled **Image Factories: Africa Cloth about Culture and Politics**. The Museum is located downtown, near the St. Patrick subway, at 55 Centre Avenue, tel: 416 599 5321, www.textilemuseum.ca Admission \$8 or less, but you may need extra pennies to spend in their nice gift store!

Our first 'scoop' this month was about wine festivals in B.C. But if it's **Ontario** that's in your travel plans this season, visit www.winesofontario.ca or call 905 684 8070 and request a copy of the tempting *Official Guide to the Wineries of Ontario*, an excellent publication full of itiner-

aries, maps and general travel information. One of the regions featured is Prince Edward County (mentioned in last month's *TravelScoop*) as well, of course, as the Niagara Peninsula, whose vintners will be holding their 53rd annual Wine Festival from 17 – 26 September. This event has been selected as Ontario's Cultural Event of the Year for three years in a row and as one of North America's Top 100 Events by the American Bus Association. They have an additional website: www.niagarawinefestival.com or tel: 905 688 0212.

If you've long promised yourself a visit to the **Canadian War Museum** in its historic building on Sussex Drive, **Ottawa**, you must hurry, for this facility is due to close on 6 September. (The new museum on LeBreton Flats will open in May 2005.) Perhaps a Labour Day week-end visit to Ottawa would fit your plans ... for over that week-end the Museum will celebrate its closing with a variety of free events: displays, hands-on exhibits, children's activities, meetings with veterans, lots of music and – at 4:30 p.m. on the 6th – the ceremonial lowering of the flags. For a summer Calendar of Events call 1 800 555 5621 or visit www.warmuseum.ca

While in the Capital Region, you may also wish to visit the **Once in French America** exhibition taking place at the **Canadian Museum of Civilization**, just across the river in **Hull, Québec**. This event (on now until 28 March 2005) celebrates the 400th anniversary of French Settlement in North America by presenting over 500 extraordinary objects from about 40 Canadian and foreign collections, with many artefacts never before seen in Canada together with performances by the Museum's resident theatre company. For details of this and other exhibitions at the Museum call 819 776 7005 or visit www.civilization.ca

This sounds like fun, especially if you can take some children to Québec City on 31 July or 1 August. Called **Charge on the Capital** it's a re-enactment of the American Invasion military campaign that could have changed the course of history. Previously staged in 1998, when over 110,000 spectators enjoyed the event, this is a portrayal of the battles between British Crown troops and 13 rebel American colonies which took place in 1776. The display will not only include 1,500 characters in period military and other historical dress, muskets, black powder cannon pieces and artillery manoeuvres, but it will also demonstrate the campaign conditions prevailing at the time, when soldiers were accompanied by their families, food was prepared by lantern light over campfires, tents and straw were used for sleeping and children played around the camp. For more details of this event call 1 800 442 0773 or visit www.capitale.gouv.qc.ca or www.quebecregion.com and click on "take the Capital by storm".

The **Charming Inns of Alberta** have just published a new guidebook listing nine properties located throughout the province. These small- to medium-sized inns are individually owned and operated and, as each is unique, travellers can build an Alberta touring itinerary around the inns and look forward to “discovering” the next property. For your copy of the brochure call 1 877 478 4667 or check out the properties (and itineraries, car rental details and more) on line at www.charminginnsofalberta.com.

If a city break in **Montréal** appeals you may like to check out the Auberge de la Fontaine, a downtown property that has received an award from Tourism Québec as the best accommodation of its kind in the province. Located a few minutes’ from the centre of Montréal, the Auberge is located in a stone, turn-of-the-last-century house facing Lafontaine park. Rooms usually start at \$153, but the website – www.aubergedela-fontaine.com – lists special week-end deals from \$99 or call 1 800 597 0597. If Montréal is in your plans call 1 877 BONJOUR for lots of information on all the exciting events happening in the city throughout the summer. If you feel you may be tempted to shop in the city, you may also like to request the *Official Shopping Guide of Montréal* which contains some discount coupons for Visa card holders.

And for **B&B accommodation** ideas as you travel in Canada, don’t forget to consult www.bbcanada.com, this country’s most extensive B&B website currently with 8,375 listings.

Many large hotel chains across Canada are offering

summer deals and temptations. Here’s a sampling.

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts has teamed up with MasterCard to help families with their summer travel plans by offering a second room at 50% off. Valid from now until 6 September, card holders will receive a second room for children 18 years or younger when the first room is booked and paid for with a MasterCard. For more information, visit www.fairmont.com/mastercard or call 1 800 441 1414. **CAA** members staying at participating **Westin, Sheraton** and **Four Points by Sheraton** properties in Canada this summer will receive special rates, as well as a bonus \$10 Petro-Canada gas and services card when booking a weekend stay on-line at www.starwood.com/drivecanada. To receive the gas card, guests must print out their online reservation and present it when they check in, along with their CAA membership card. The “Drive Canada” promotion is available weekends through Labour Day.

The **Sheraton Centre Toronto** has launched a treat: an **Art Gallery of Ontario** package that includes accommodation for two in a Club Level Room, full Club Privileges including complimentary continental breakfast and evening hors d’oeuvres in the private, 43rd floor Club Lounge and two vouchers for the Art Gallery of Ontario’s big exhibition **Turner, Whistler, Monet Impressionist Visions** exhibit. The package is priced at \$299 per night, dbl, and is available until the exhibition closes on 12 September 2004. More information at www.sheraton.com/centretoronto, while for information on the exhibition call 416 979 6648 or 1 877 225 4246, www.ago.net

s h o p p i n g

Here are details of a few products that are designed to make travelling just a little bit easier or more comfortable. All the websites mentioned below offer a wide variety of travel-related products; the products listed here have just recently been brought to our attention.

Tranquileyes

For eyes that get irritated and dry on long flights, this adjustable, light-blocking eye mask contains two removable moisture pads that instantly rehydrate dry eyes caused by low-humidity in aircraft cabins and hotel rooms, and soothe irritation from smoke, dust, or extended contact lens use. Just moisten the pads with water, insert them in the mask and place it over your eyes for 20 minutes. Includes travel pouch and wash bag. US\$34.85. Available at www.magellans.com

Lighted Travel Makeup Mirror

This compact lighted mirror is designed with a contem-

porary finish. It’s easy to pack (its arm adjusts for storage), operates on either batteries or adapter, and offers 5x magnification for precise makeup, lens application and easier flossing. US\$25.99. Available at www.etravelergear.com

Always Accurate Alarm

Using an internal antenna tuned to the World Time Clock in Fort Collins, Colorado, this travel alarm automatically adjusts to the time zone you’re in. Accurate up to one second per million years and no re-sets necessary! Features include snooze function, dual time, large easy-to-read digits and a base that twists to stand up or pack flat. US\$49.00. Available at www.travelsmith.com

Oral-B Brush-Ups

These disposable, textured dental wipes are a great way to clean your teeth and freshen your mouth without the need for water. They should be available in a drug store near you now, at a price of C\$3.79 for a package of 12.

Anguilla

There's a new Tourist Board in Canada, and it's promoting a lovely-looking and rarely-heard-about Caribbean island. Yes, now with a quick phone call you can receive a travel planner for Anguilla in the British West Indies. There are no direct flights from Canada, but the island can easily be reached via a short hop from Puerto Rico, St. Martin or Antigua and it all certainly looks unspoiled and appealing. The full-colour brochure lists and illustrates the island's major resorts, some small hotels and guest houses and many apartments and villas for rent, along with a calendar of events, car rental information, a list of local artists and more. Most properties offer summers special. For your copy of the guide call 416 923 9813 or 1 877 GO ANGUILLA or www.go-anguilla.com

Antarctica

For those interested in visiting Antarctica in an expedition ship, Canadian adventure tour operator G.A.P Adventures has acquired the ship *Explorer*, described as a legend in adventure circles as it was the first passenger ship to venture south of the Antarctic Circle. G.A.P will use this ship for its Antarctica programme as well as for expeditions deep into the Amazon River and north into the Arctic. Antarctic voyages (with prices from \$3,220 pp) will commence mid-November and run until early March each year. For more information: 1 800 465 5600, www.gapadventures.com

Britain

Britain has always offered some unusual places to stay, but now there's a company that specializes in offering some of the quirkiest of all. Called **Distinctly Different**, the company is owned by Peter and Priscilla Roberts, who themselves own a 3-bedroomed B&B in a watermill in Wiltshire. Their list of properties includes both B&B's and rental accommodation. There's a long list from which to choose: a Victoria lock-up which later became a police station, a chapel in a graveyard, churches, a castle big enough for a wedding party, oast houses, lighthouses, forges, a school and lots more. Prices average around £35 (about C\$87) pp., pn., with the self-catering homes costing from £250 (about C\$625) per week. The website is fun and quirky too – www.distinctlydifferent.co.uk – and there are listings of unusual properties in other countries too. If you do not have internet access the Roberts can be contacted at 4 Masons Lane, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1QN, tel: (011 44) 1225 866 842.

Europe

Idyll Ltd., a U.S. company that offers the 'Untour' European vacation rentals, is offering some last-minute deals this summer, until 25 August. These vacations offer two weeks in private rental accommodation in city

apartments or rural houses, transportation in the form of car rental or rail passes for two weeks, airport transfers and local English-speaking support. Destinations include **Paris, Austria, Holland** (*city apartments in beautiful Leiden – one of my favourite Dutch cities – Ed.*), **Germany** (villages along the Rhine), **Tuscany** and **Switzerland** (including the dramatic Bernese Oberland). For details contact Idyll Ltd at 1 888 868 6871, e-mail: info@untours.com, www.untours.com This company quotes air-inclusive prices from New York or Boston, but ground-only arrangements are offered too.

Mexico

We don't really want to think about it yet, but as colder weather returns to Canada we will, of course, be bringing you some news of Mexico. Until then, readers may be interested to know that according to statistics just released by Statistics Canada (www.statcan.ca) Mexico is now the most popular foreign destination for Canadians. We took 5.1 million foreign trips in 2003 and Mexico received 717,000 visits from us. One Mexican date you might like to keep in mind is 11 – 21 November when the Festival Gourmet will be held in **Puerto Vallarta**. Between those dates chefs from all over the world will join chefs of 18 local restaurants where visitors can eat, drink and learn about food and wine. www.festivalgourmet.com.

U.S.A.

Some news of a scam from the U.S. of which you should be aware if you're planning overnight stays in any **U.S. National Parks**. The advice is: don't use unauthorized online reservation agencies who charge unnecessary service fees for booking a room or tour and who may claim that accommodation in the park lodges is sold out except through their services. It's easy to tell the difference between concessionaires authorized by the National Park service and other, unauthorized, internet booking services because the NPS website – www.nps.gov – lists all the authorized companies at every park.

Santa Fe has many summer offerings for lovers of music and history. There's opera until 28 August (1 800 280 4654 or www.santafeopera.org) and The Museum of Fine Arts is the first stop in a three-city United States tour of the remarkable exhibition entitled **Nicholas and Alexandra: At Home with the Last Tsar and His Family** which will continue until 5 September. The *Official 2004 Santa Fe Visitors Guide* contains everything a visitor needs to plan a stay in Santa Fe including articles or listings of attractions, lodging, shopping, day trips, restaurants and cuisine, the city's prolific art scene, activities for kids, the city's romantic side, historic and cultural background of Santa Fe, a calendar of events and more. For your copy call 1 800 777 2489 or visit www.santafe.org.

www.visithebrides.com. One major island that we did not get to was Mull. If this isle is of interest, see www.isle.of.mull.com. For a general overview of the whole area, as well as for its excellent accommodation information, see www.visitscotland.com.

● **Accommodation** of all types is abundant on Arran and Skye, less so on Islay, Harris and Lewis and prices are quoted per person, per night. On the basis of our experience, going to Arran and Skye in the off season without a reservation is fine. We would not go to Islay, the only island where we pre-booked a room, without settled accommodation and another time we would likely also book in advance for Harris and Lewis. We stayed in some excellent places and would recommend the following:

Coultorsay House B&B, Bruichladdich, Isle of Islay, PA49 7UN (Hilary MacIntyre); phone 01496 850298; wood.islay@virgin.net.


Berabhaigh B&B, 3 Limepark, Broadfort, Isle of Skye IV49 9AE, tel. Anne MacMillan at (011 44) 1471 822 372; berabhaigh@freeuk.com, www.isleofskye.net/berabhaigh/

Green Acres Guest House, Viewfield Road, Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9ES, tel: Ewan or Marie MacRae 1478 612 605 greenacreskye@aol.com, www.greenacres-skye.co.uk/

Seaside Villa B&B, Back, Isle of Lewis HS2 0LQ, tel Margaret Fraser 1851 820 208, seasidevilla22@talk21.com www.witb.co.uk/links/seasidevilla.htm

If you are flying to Glasgow and need somewhere to stay relatively close to the airport, we would recommend the following B&B which is 20 minutes from the airport via the Erskine Bridge:

Ail Claude B&B, 87 Glasgow Road, Dumbarton G82 1RE, tel: Deirdre Valentine 1389 732 819, ailclaud@aol.com

● **And finally, a word about the weather.** We were lucky with the weather. It is certainly possible to have rain during your holiday in this part of the world. All you can do is hope for the best, pack your rain wear and waterproof footwear and go. Whatever the weather, you will have a great time. For a little forewarning, however, try the BBC weather site for Scotland: www.bbc.co.uk/weather/ukweather/scotland/. 

Some accompanying thoughts ...

● **Renting a house.** It was very relaxing to know we had a 'home' to return to at the end of each day and we enjoyed the freedom to come and go as we wished with no real itinerary. It was a lovely way to explore a beautiful part of France. Not having much French, it was also reassuring to have Ulrike nearby to make reservations and enquiries for us.

● **Location.** As much as we thoroughly enjoyed our location in this scenic, less-well-known northern part of Provence, and where there was more than enough to see, it did have some slight drawbacks. The house's location in a small village, without any facilities to speak of, meant we had to drive everywhere. Ulrike says she does have guests who return year after year and who don't rent a car, but we don't think this would suit most Canadians who have travelled quite a way in order to explore. Unless the major roads are taken, distances were surprising and it nearly always took us longer than we had thought to get to our day's destination. The toll road is very fast but, like most super-highways, was totally uninteresting. We much preferred the small, more scenic roads. But this meant we didn't get far enough south to see some of the most famous places in Provence such as Aix-en-Provence and Avignon nor, of course, did we get right down to the coast where Nice and Cannes are situated. However, such visits are possible.


● **Weather.** The weather was much like a lovely fall in Southern Ontario. For our first few days the famous *Mistral* wind was blowing up the Rhone Valley to our hilltop position. With the wind the temperatures dropped a bit and we added sweaters under our jackets. But after that we enjoyed consistently mild days when we could easily sit in the sun

with bare arms. At night, again because of our high location, it got fairly cool and we were grateful for the good electric heaters located in each room.

● **Driving.** We had no problems driving in Provence at all. Even tiny rural roads have good surfaces and everything is invariably well signed. There was very little traffic ... at times we were the only car on a road. The toll highway is fast – 140 km – but nowhere near as busy as Ontario's 401. Of course we did have to deal with those roundabouts but, again, the traffic was usually light so these did not pose a serious problem to us.

● **The People.** Contrary to the myths perpetuated about the French, we found the people pleasant and helpful. From our first taxi driver in Paris to the young man on the train platform who helped me on board with my luggage just as the train began to move, everyone was friendly.

● **Costs.** France is expensive for Canadians and we found the prices of most items – including restaurant meals – high. However, the rental fee of our delightful little house was excellent value at the late-season rate of C\$750 per week (*quoted on the web as \$800 this year – Ed.*)

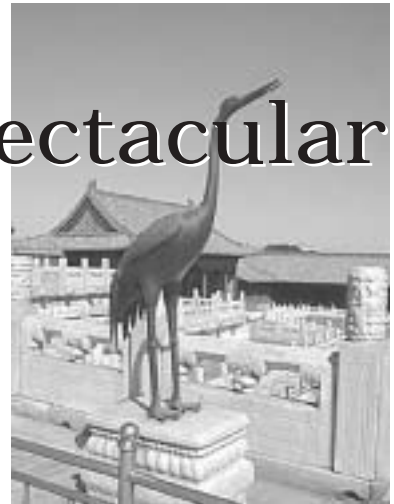
● **More information.** Mme Ulrike Wanié can be contacted at La Magnanerie, 26160 Châteauneuf de Mazenc, France, tel: 011 33 475 46 25 34, UWLaMagnanerie@aol.com or contact the Wanié Family, 22 Wells Hill Avenue, Toronto, ON, M5R 3A6, tel: 416 533 0391. There are also two good websites with lots of details and photographs as well as comments from a number of Canadians who have stayed in these properties: www.lamagnanerie.com and www.bbfrance.com/Mazenc.html. 

FROM \$3,942 FOR 18 DAYS

China ... Yangtze Spectacular

FULLY ESCORTED

Departures: 26 September & 17 October 2004



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 (now in the process of changing 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!

*Please call 1 877 926 2500 or
416 926 2500 for the
complete itinerary*

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing from:

Vancouver	\$3,942 pp/dbl
Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops	\$4,089 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,188 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,434 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,372 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,298 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,372 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec City/London	\$4,495 pp/dbl
Thunder Bay/St. John's	\$4,643 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$1,200 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Taxes and visas extra.

GREAT ADD-ONS:

Hong Kong	4 days/3 nights	\$1,188.00
Tokyo	4 days/3 nights	\$892.00

Prices are subject to confirmation

Editor Ann Wallace took the China Yangtze trip and her 14-page, illustrated account is available. For your copy please send \$5 with your address.

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 time in Beijing & Shanghai

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

28 days, prices include all airfares

Space limited to 20 people

Turkey - An Anatolian Adventure *Departing: 28 August 2004*

If you can travel with us for 28 days, you might like to consider our longer tour of Turkey. In addition to all the destinations in 'A Traveller's Turkey' detailed above, this tour also includes a trip to legendary Troy, a tour of the historic battlefields of Gallipoli, a visit to the walled city of Iznik, a drive to Gordion (the home of Alexander's famous knot) and to many other historic sites such as Catal Hoyuk, Xanthus and mysterious Termessos, one of Turkey's most beautiful ruins. The extra time here also means more time on the beautiful coast, where you will enjoy boat trips, picnics and beach time or you may decide to take an overnight *gulet* cruise from Antalya to Kas. This truly is a superlative tour that covers all the highlights of this wonderful land.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES (subject to confirmation) **departing from:**

Toronto	\$6,750.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,850.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,850.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$7,150.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$7,000.00 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$7,000.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$6,950.00 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,900.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$670 (Sharing can be arranged.) **Taxes included, visa extra.**

Your tour includes:

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

21 days, prices include all airfares

Space limited to 20 people

A Traveller's Turkey *Departing: 18 September 2004*

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 Kapatokya (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 (subject to confirmation) **departing from:**

Toronto	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$4,950.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$5,195.00 pp/dbl	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 flights with Air Canada
- All domestic flights
- 20 nights' accommodation
- All 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

Vineyard Walking through Piedmonte

Daily departures from July to September (travel independently or with a group)

Set out to discover the magical hills and breathtaking scenery of the Langhe and Roero regions of Piedmonte ... a beautiful region of Italy that is still virtually undiscovered and untouched by major tourism. Discover a land of nature, art, medieval architecture, famous wines and delicious food. Stroll through vineyards between ancient hill-top towns, stop for a picnic in the shade of a hazelnut tree, explore ancient castles, visit the cellars of famous wineries and enjoy one of the world's finest cuisines. Our 'Hiking without Luggage' trips allow you to explore this region at your own pace. You'll stay in quaint small hotels and farmhouses (always with private facilities), you'll enjoy memorable breakfasts and dinners each day and be provided with a picnic lunch to enjoy in the countryside while we'll take care of your luggage.

Before or after your trip you can extend your exploration of this region with an add-on to Turin and with an additional 3--night Wine and Gourmet, self-drive tour with all meals and car rental for 4 days included.

LAND-ONLY PRICES

Vineyard Walking \$2,255 pp.dbl.

Turin add-on from \$286 pp. per night

Wine and Gourmet self-drive adventure \$1,253 pp.dbl

Taxes extra. Prices are subject to confirmation

All your domestic and international flights can be arranged by The Travel Society. Please call for complete quotations.

Your tour includes:

- Transfers from Milan
- 7 nights' accommodation
- Breakfast, dinner and picnic lunch daily
- Local tours of castles, villages and wineries
- Walking map with detailed instruction
- Daily luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- Hotel service and taxes

Please call 1 877 926 2500 or 416 926 2500 for the complete itineraries

NEW PRICES
from
\$9,899

Down Under in Australia & New Zealand Cultures, Trains & Wineries 28 Days.

With optional 3-day Fiji extension Departure: 13 November 2004

Highlights...

Cairns, Great Barrier Reef, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, The Ghan, Adelaide, Barossa Wine Valley, Great Ocean Road, Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, Hunter Valley, Queenstown, Milford Sound, Mt. Cook, Christchurch, Tranz-Alpine Express, Wellington, Overland Express Train, Rotorua

Imagine spending almost a month of your life being pampered as you are shown two of the world's very special – and unique – destinations. Come with The Travel Society to Australia and New Zealand and, yes, you will enjoy a luxurious trip and be shown most of the highlights of 'downunder', all at an exceptional price. What would be on your list of highlights for these two countries? Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef in a glass-bottomed boat or with a snorkel; a ride on the spectacular Kuranda Railway; a trip to the Outback, Alice Springs and Ayers Rock; a trip on the legendary Ghan train; wine tasting in the Barossa Valley and Coonawarra; a trip on the Great Ocean Road – one of the world's most famous drives; Melbourne and Canberra; Sydney, with dinner and a performance at the Sydney Opera House; penguins, koalas and kangaroos; New Zealand's handsome city of Queenstown; a cruise on Milford Sound; Mt Cook; New Zealand wine tastings; Christchurch; the Tranz-Alpine Express train ride; the ferry ride to Wellington on the North Island; the Overland Express train to Rotorua; Auckland; the glowworm-lit Waitomo Caves; Maori villages, songs and dances; kiwi birds and other unique wildlife? Those are the highlights our trip covers, but of course there's lots more to tell you: excellent hotels, gourmet dinners, visits with local families, flightseeing tours, time for shopping and museums ... in fact 28 days filled with new sights, sounds and friends. It's the Travel Society's 28-day Cultures, Trains and Wineries tour of Australia and New Zealand. And while you're over in that part of the world, why don't you also enjoy a 3-night extension to Fiji where you can take an island tour, explore South Pacific Island culture and relax for a while on the island's sandy beaches beside clear ocean waters.

PRICES INCLUDING AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto	\$9,999 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$ 9,949 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$9,999 pp/dbl	Edmonton	\$ 9,949 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$10,099 pp/dbl	Victoria	\$10,019pp/dbl
Montreal	\$9,999 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$10,099 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$9,899 pp/dbl		Single supplement \$1,750

Optional add-on 3-night Fiji \$895 pp/dbl

Prices are subject to confirmation

Your tour includes:

- Return trans-Pacific airfare with Qantas
- Domestic air from your gateway
- First-class hotels accommodation throughout
- Luxury a/c touring coaches
- All tain fares
- An experienced tour escort
- Special Travel Society experiences
- Meals as per itinerary
- Fully comprehensive insurance
- All transfers with full luggage service
- All sightseeing (with no hidden extras)
- Hotel taxes and Australian and NZ GST.

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

14 days departing 14 September & 12 October 2004

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
: 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
- First class Galapagos cruise
- 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.  reg #01280649

India's Golden Triangle

FULLY ESCORTED

20 days departing 11 October 2004

from
\$4,496

India is one of the world's greatest travel destinations. But unless you're a young backpacker, a tour is the way to go! And The Travel Society is offering the ultimate tour of India's fabled northwestern region, known as The Golden Triangle. This tour will show you the highlights of this fascinating region. You'll spend time in the economic powerhouse of India - Mumbai (once known as Bombay) where you'll drive along Marine Drive, visit the Hanging Gardens, enjoy the Prince of Wales Museum and stroll through Neru Park. On another day you visit St. Thomas Cathedral, the Jain Temple and see the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi as well as take an optional tour to Elephanta caves. Then it's on to Udaipur, the most romantic city in all of Rajasthan, known as the city of lakes. Here there are palaces and temples to visit as well as beautiful gardens with pools, fountains, pagodas and carvings. Mt. Abu-Ranakpur is next on the itinerary, famous for its 15th century temples, before you proceed to the famous medieval city of Jodhpur, home of the massive Mehrangharh Fort and many exquisite palaces. Then how about a camel safari ... sure to bring lots of laughs and some great photographs! Khimsar and Nagaur are next on the itinerary, where there's more sightseeing and lots of leisure time for relaxing, shopping or wandering alone with your camera. Bikaner is next - a royal walled city with a wealth of architectural heritage - where you'll visit Lalgah Palace Museum, a combination of European luxury and Oriental fantasy and Junagarh Fort, which was started in 1587 and houses 37 palaces, pavilions and temples. You'll then travel on to Mandawa, known for its exquisite frescoes where you'll stay in Castle Mandawa, a unique desert resort. Jaipur - the pink city - is next; a city of beauty famous for its bazaar full of wonderful gifts. Here you can take an elephant-ride excursion to Amer Fort and also see the Palace of the Winds and the stone Observatory. Of course Agra is on the itinerary, for that never-to-be forgotten dawn visit to the Taj Mahal, before you travel on to famous Delhi, the capital of India. Throughout this trip you will stay in first-class hotels, travel in deluxe a/c, fully-equipped coaches and enjoy wonderful meals, banquets and entertainment. Many days will be full, but there's plenty of free time too. Haven't you always wanted to visit India? Make this the year and come with The Travel Society this fall.



PRICES INCLUDING AIR departing from:

Vancouver	\$4,696 pp/dbl	Toronto	\$4,496 pp/dbl
Victoria	\$4,896 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$4,496 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$4,696 pp/dbl	Montreal	\$4,496 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$4,696 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$4,696 pp/dbl
Saskatoon	\$4,696 pp/dbl	St. John's	\$4,896 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,696 pp/dbl	Single supplement	\$794

Prices are subject to confirmation Taxes extra

Your tour includes:

- All international & domestic flights
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- State transport taxes
- All meals
- English-speaking guide
- All entrance fees
- Elephant ride
- Village safari in Jodhpur

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 (a 16% saving off the regular \$95.00)
 ___ **1 year for \$44.00**
 (a 10% saving off the regular \$49.00)

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 signature: _____

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

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