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Travel Scoop

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A Hidden Gem & a Short Tour in Wales
The Berkshires, U.S.A.
Discovering Croatia
Travel Fit Tips
Canadian Digest

TravelScoop

The Travel Society Magazine

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*Kitchen entrance to
Mandinam
(Wallace)*

Where is this?
Find out next month!



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editor's letter ...

Spring is with us and that means we turn much of our attention to our own great country. So there's a very slight change in TravelScoop's layout this week in that all our 'scoops' have news on Canadian destinations, submitted, as always, by our members. In addition, our Travel Digest section is devoted exclusively to Canada. We hope these recommendations and tidbits lead you to some wonderful travel experiences here in Canada, whether close to home or across the country.

I'm sure most people agree that the new technologies that have brought us e-mail and the world wide web are both a boon and a curse. A boon because it's so easy to keep in touch with people and do research, a curse because these activities can be very time-consuming. An example of this is the website covering travel in Croatia mentioned on p. 15 of this issue. I logged on in the middle of a working day and was soon lost in a daydreaming session. First I was renting a car and exploring every corner of a country I know very little about, then I was staying in a lighthouse, then I was renting a villa and finally I was bidding on a property there ... which brought me back to the car rental/exploration dream and, finally, to the realization that I need to save more pennies! But most good travel websites are the same ... compiling our Travel Digest section (or in this month's case Canadian Digest) leads to lots of dreaming and lots of late evenings in my office catching up! I hope you enjoy this edition and all its links and, most importantly, I hope you enjoy any travels that ensue.

Bon voyage!



Îles de la Madeleine ... a Place of Sensual Delights

Golden sun shining on blue waters that rolled onto miles of fine white sandy beaches, red cliffs rising from the rocks below, elegantly-served gourmet food, tastefully-decorated rooms with stunning views, green fields and seaside wharfs, the friendliness of a Québec welcome ... all these things, and many more, are part of what a visitor will find in the Îles de la Madeleine ... or Magdalen Islands if you prefer the English name.

In July last year we set off from Souris, P.E.I., on the 5-hour, 105 km, ferry ride to the Islands. Although we'd heard that this trip can be a bit of a challenge, on our day the water was as calm as the proverbial millpond and the sun was shining. The boat was large and comfortable, with a musician entertaining in the bar.

The Îles de la Madeleine are located in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, 215 km from the Gaspé Peninsula. The archipelago consists of about a dozen small islands, of which six are connected by narrow sand dunes, bridges and causeways. On the islands water can commonly be seen from both sides of the road, and you immediately feel the influence of the gulf on the way of life there. As you would expect, fishing and especially lobstering is the main industry. The season had just finished when we were there and there were

huge and tidy piles of lobster pots beside every wharf and house.

Havre sur Mer, the beautiful B&B where we stayed, was the result of an internet search of the comprehensive information provided by Tourisme Îles de la Madeleine. It definitely exceeded our expectations. It was really a small inn. There were several public rooms hung with an eclectic collection of local art and furnished with comfortable chairs conducive to a good chat or spending some time with one of the many interesting books within reach. Each of the seven bedrooms had a private bath and a balcony looking out onto gardens and the scenic waterside location. To one side was a small harbour with its multi-coloured fishing fleet and, to the other, a red lighthouse on the white sandy shore lapped by the seemingly limitless blue Gulf.

Each morning our breakfast was served in a sunny room whose large windows looked out onto a priceless view. Our hostess, Thérèse Bergeron, is a gourmet chef, and every morning we were presented with a divine *trois plats* repast. For instance, the first course might have poached pear slices nestled in a swirl of strawberry coulis and a small chocolate croissant pastry or a one-bite muffin. The second course might be an egg with cheese cooked in phyllo pastry and, finally, maybe a tasty apple *crêpe* decorated with a real pansy bloom.

Thérèse was a fount of information on the Islands and would gladly sit down to tell us about everything we needed to see and how to find it. She also recommended the restaurants we visited on our three evenings on les Îles. They provided a most surprising aspect of our stay as we had not been prepared for the ultra-gourmet fare that was available. The Islands are very much in tune with the best French cooking and, combined with the fresh produce from the Gulf, one could dine royally.

On our first evening we

went to a small village bistro overflowing with local people. I believe we were the only people "from away", but we were welcomed by the owner as long lost friends...hands shaken, cheeks kissed. The air was filled with cheerful chatter in French, but we were served our delicious fresh fish meal in English. Part way through the evening a woman sat down at a piano and before we knew it we were all in a sing-a-long of wonderful old songs of Anglo origin that I was surprised the locals would even know. Then, at one point, she played a piece that must have been a Quebecois folk song, and the entire room sang along, so quietly and meaningfully. And thus began our three memorable days in these unique Islands.

We did do a surprising amount of driving on the Islands, which are stretched out and scattered with small towns, but there was very little traffic and the vistas were enchanting. Most of the houses were quite small and seemed to be dotted around the open land as if some giant's hand had just dropped them at random. Neatness was a common virtue and the houses wore the brilliant colours of an artist's palette, appearing to have been freshly painted in scarlets, yellows, and a whole range of blue and green hues. One house was painted the exact shade of deep lavender as the field of lupines in bloom around it. Fresh laundry flapping on lines outside these houses is so prevalent that local artists have turned them into a *motif* on much of their work. There were many artists and craftspeople whose attractive *ateliers* invited exploration.

Among the many activities for the energetic visitor are diving, sailing, cycling, golf, horseback riding and hiking. Autumn can be very warm in the Islands and this is the ideal time for photo safaris, trekking and birdwatching among the marine bird colonies.

We were lucky enough to be there when the summer's wildflow-



Fishing fleet near our B&B (Howard)

ers were at their peak. Every bit of roadside and open land was a-bloom: yellows, reds and white of assorted flowers, mingling with the beauty of the sturdy purple, white and pink lupines and the ethereal blue of wild irises.

All too soon we were driving on to the ferry for our return trip to P.E.I. We were sad to leave this very special place, but of course our collection of marvellous memories travelled home with us. *Les Îles* are certainly a unique part of not just Québec, but Canada, and can make an unforgettable addition to any holiday in the Maritimes.

If you go ...

The Islands are part of Québec so, naturally, French is the local language but we had no problem using English. Everyone welcomed us heartily and spoke English when they found out 'bonjour' was about the extent of our French.

Note: the Islands are in the Atlantic Time Zone, one hour ahead of the rest of Québec.

Costs are not inexpensive. We paid just as much for an exquisite gourmet meal as you would in Toronto or Montréal but there was a wide range in the types of restaurants and cafes available, something to suit every taste. Gas prices were high, as they were everywhere in the Maritimes. Our lovely B&B room cost \$140 per night and was worth every penny.

Some details ...

The islands' marvellous website – www.tourismeÎlesdelamadeleine.com – has every kind of information, from how to book the ferry to listings of hotels and restaurants. Or, tel: 1 877 624 4437 and request their complete information package.

Havre sur Mer B & B, 1197 Ch.Bassin, L'Anse-à-la-Cabane, Îles de la Madeleine, QC, G4T 0E7, tel: 418 937 5675, fax: 418 937 2540, the website www.demarque.qc.ca/havre has great photos.

Three excellent, but diverse, restaurants that we enjoyed:

Café de la Grave, La Grave, Havre-Aubert, tel: 418 937 5765 ... a bistro in a small village with a local atmosphere.

La Table des Roy, La Verniere, Etang-du-Nord, tel: 418 986 3004 ... superb gourmet dining in a *très élégante* atmosphere and reputed to be the 'best table' in the Islands. It would be impossible to argue against this claim.

La P'tite Baie, 187, Route 199, Havre-aux-Maisons, QC, G0B 1K0 ... local specialties in a charming old house. Tel: 418 969 4073, e-mail: auberge.petitebaie@sympatico.ca This wonderful old house was used as a customs post at the turn of the century and to this day retains its fine historical atmosphere. As well as a restaurant serving local specialties, they have four cozy, peaceful, ensuite rooms.

Vera Howard
Brooklin, ON

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!

A Québec B&B

On a recent visit to Lachute for their renowned Tuesday flea market, we decided to stay nearby rather than making the 1½ hour drive from Ottawa at the crack of dawn. The idea was to check out the flea market when the dealers were setting up the night before just in case any bargains surfaced and to be on hand for an early start the next morning. The Lachute Flea Market is staged all year except for three weeks over Christmas, though in the dead of winter the outside action is somewhat reduced. The market is held on the main east-west street – rue Principale – on the western outskirts of town.

We stayed at a delightful B&B in St André d'Argenteuil, about 10 km south of Lachute. Faye and Noel Dumont operate La Seigneurie B&B in their Victorian style mid-1800s house beside the North River. Both double rooms (one queen, one double) in the manor have en suite bathrooms with showers but no tubs and they are quite separate from the family part of the house. The Dumonts have thought of all those little

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things that make the difference between a good and a bad B&B - like a corkscrew and wine glasses, good bedside lamps, an alarm clock, and a refrigerator in the upstairs hall that is shared by both rooms.

To accommodate our early morning departure Faye left all the breakfast fixings in the dining room for us, including muffins (labeled as to variety) and the coffee maker that just needed a button pushed. Had we been breakfasting at a decent hour we could have dined on the terrace beside the pool. The Dumonts are bilingual and their rates are \$75 double, \$65 single. Visa is accepted.

La Seigneurie B&B, 14, rue de la Seigneurie, St. André d'Argenteuil, QC J0V 1X0, tel: 450 537 1771, fax: 450 537 1932, e-mail: faye.dumont@sympatico.ca, www.gitedelaseigneurie.com,

*Yvonne Butorac
Toronto, ON*

Friendly Manitoba

Have you been to that famous junction, Portage and Main, in Winnipeg recently? If not, you might be surprised to see that there are vast underground corridors beneath the pavement there, allowing you to go to banks, small boutiques or fast food emporiums without being buffeted by the infamous wind. Beware that this area is quite silent on the weekends so if staying at the nearby Fairmont Hotel, look for other dining locations. The Forks, a fascinating area on the river a short walk away with many restaurants, shops, entertainment and so on is a good bet. Or you could walk the other way and visit The Manitoba Museum, a wonderful collection of natural history dioramas, flora and fauna, and memorabilia of the fur trades and early settlers. It's well worth a spending several hours there. Another beautiful spot is the Leo Moll Sculpture garden.

From there drive west to Neepawa, where you can see Canadian

authoress Margaret Lawrence's early home. Her stately dwelling is open to the public and some of her writings and photos can be seen. Neepawa also celebrates a Lily Festival in mid July.

Minnedosa was a good spot to spend the night and The Castle Bed and Breakfast certainly, lived up to its billing as an antique-filled, Victorian haven, suitable for a romantic getaway. Here we slept under a canopy and breakfasted on ham and mushroom quiche, fresh fruit and cinnamon buns. Wonderful! The Castle B&B, prices \$50-\$99, 149 - 2nd Avenue SW, Minnedosa, MB, R0J 1E0, tel: 204 867 2830, www.castlebed.com.

When continuing toward Dauphin the road takes you through Riding National Park where peaceful Clear Lake lies waiting for wild life or tourists to admire her beauty. There are ice cream stands, gift shops and pretty little inns too. Dauphin along # 16 is in the heart of a strong Ukrainian community and has Selo Ukraina, a small village of historical buildings near by. It is known for Countryfest, a music fest in early July and a large Ukrainian festival in August. Many churches in the area proudly display their distinctive Ukrainian architecture.

Driving across the flat, farm countryside in the Interlakes District was relaxing and interesting with many herds of cattle grazing along the way. It was no surprise to see the sign, "Cattle Centre of Manitoba". Our destination was Gimli, but we took a detour to Hecla Island Provincial Park which juts into Lake Winnipeg. Here silvery green grasses blew and families of Canadian geese strolled by as we passed. Gull Harbour at the tip had facilities for all your holiday pleasures with a sparkling white and red lighthouse ready to direct sailors home.

Just one warning: healthy, hungry mosquitoes live in Manitoba, so be prepared.

'Gimli' is Icelandic for 'Home of the Gods' and this city, sitting on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, is proud of its Icelandic roots and flies the Icelandic and Canadian flags on lawns and buildings. Our B&B there was

called Always Summer, a nod to its huge heated indoor pool, sauna, and whirlpool. Hostess Linda will serve breakfast either indoors or out, so on a beautiful sunny morning we needed no encouragement to slide onto high stools on the deck, and sample her spectacular baked French toast with pears, blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. Golden marigolds tucked into the napkins and a selection of summer jams continued the feeling that summer smiled here. Our huge en suite, with sitting area with TV and DVD, was decorated in calming neutral colours. But the town's excellent Icelandic Museum, waterfront vistas, restaurants and Canada Day fireworks were far too compelling to worry about TV. Always Summer: 1, 3rd Avenue, Box 519, Gimli, MB R0C 1B0, tel: 204 642 7013, www.alwayssummer.ca, rates \$80 including taxes. A very relaxing stay.

Continuing the loop back to Winnipeg don't miss Lower Fort Gary Living Museum, a tribute to the fur traders who lived and worked here. We also made a two-day stop at Steinbach to visit the Mennonite Historical Village, and small Metis and French communities nearby. Here we stayed at Sleep Suite Motel, 1 800 667 1324, www.sleepsuite.com/contact.html for \$68 including continental breakfast.

All this in our own land? Friendly folk at every turn, ready to chat with us, help with directions, or just act neighbourly? Marvellous! You really should take time to visit Manitoba.

Marg Lynn

SORRY ...

A big "oops"! The telephone code for the Harrogate area of England (see April, p. 8, 2nd column, 3rd line down) should be 1423. Please make a note in your copies. I do apologize to those of you who have been inconvenienced and wish to thank those of you who brought this error to my attention.

AW

Lachine, PQ

Follow the Evangeline Trail and Discover Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Wolfville is about an hour's drive north from Halifax and is well worth the detour. It is a charming university town, well endowed with elegant large homes, stately trees and the aura of its Acadian heritage.

Acadia University, with its schools of music, divinity, arts and sciences, occupies a prime location. Its beautiful campus contains many architecturally-interesting buildings enhanced by the sweep of lush green lawns. A visit to the K.C. Irving Environmental Sciences Research Centre is a must. This extraordinary building has a student lounge that resembles the lobby of a five-star hotel, as well as a huge greenhouse which houses on-going natural science experiments. Parts of this are open to visitors and provide an interesting insight into the work being done there. All this is set in a site which contains not only a formal garden beside the buildings, but a 6-acre native botanical garden which simulates every sort of natural environment to be found in Nova Scotia.

Wolfville is really for the birds ... Chimney Swifts, to be exact. It is a tradition for visitors and locals alike to gather in a little park in the centre of town as dusk descends to await the Chimney Swifts who circle, first in ones and twos, until a large, aerobatic, swirling cloud is overhead. At an unknown signal, in one big downward swoop, they drop into an old industrial chimney where they roost for the night. In the morning they leave and every evening, without fail, return, to the delight of the humans gathered to see them. There is an

interesting interpretive kiosk in the park, named for Robie Tufts, a local naturalist and ornithologist and author of the much-respected *Birds of Nova Scotia*.

Although Wolfville is quite a small centre, a gourmet can happily dine for many nights at a different and excellent restaurant. One of the newest is named "Tempest". Since the décor is ultra-serene and Zen-like, it begged the question why give it a name like that which triggered the opposite feeling. There was a very logical answer. It seems the owners had experienced several hurricanes when living in the Caribbean. They well remembered when the 'eye' passed over and tranquillity briefly replaced the mad, rushing windstorm.

So, if you need a refuge from the storm of life, a dinner at Tempest is definitely the answer. The food is absolutely incredible and is served by a very knowledgeable staff. Highly recommended.

There are any pleasant places in which to stay if you plan a trip to Wolfville. A famous hostelry like Blomidon Inn, with its ornate architecture and classic, old-world atmosphere would be an excellent choice. Quite a number of the elegant old homes are now B&B's. We chose "In Wolfville B&B" located in one of these lovely houses. Our room was enormous, containing two large beds covered in beautiful handmade quilts, a fireplace, and enough space in the middle of a gleaming hardwood floor to hold a dance, plus an en suite bathroom equal to any top hotel. A tasty continental breakfast was served ... large enough to keep us going all morning.

A few days in this area can pass very happily as there are many places within a short driving distance to be

seen and enjoyed. A visit to Grand Pre is a must. This is the seat of Acadian history and is a Canadian National Historic Site. There is a central structure with displays and dioramas and an extremely interesting film. This building is set in grounds that were once an Acadian village before it was destroyed in 1755 during the Expulsion. A charming little church is reached through a long alley of trees and flower beds and there is a beautiful statue of "Evangeline", inspired by Longfellow's epic poem about the plight of the Acadians.

If a Maritime holiday is on your wish list, do include a couple of days at Wolfville. You won't be disappointed.

If you go ...

Nova Scotia publishes a thick glossy travel guide that covers every possible aspect of planning a trip to the province. Call 1 800 565 0000 to request a copy or visit www.novascotia.com

In Wolfville B&B, 56 Main Street, Wolfville, NS B4P 1B7, tel: 902 542 0400 or 1 888 542 0400, www.inwolfville.ns.ca, prices range from \$80 to \$140.

Blomidon Inn, 195 Main Street, Wolfville, NS, B4P 1C3, tel: 902 542 2291 or 1 800 565 2291, www.theblomidon.net. Prices range from \$89 to \$249, with dinner-inclusive packages available.

Tempest Restaurant, 117 Front Street, tel: 902 542 0588 or 1 866 542 0588. Before you go you may like to check their website - www.tempest.ca - to read the menus and see what's in store! You'll also notice they cater to theatre-goers with a late-night *tapas* selection.

Vera Howard



A student lounge in Acadia University (Howard)



"In Wolfville" B&B (Howard)



A Hidden Gem *in* Wales

story and photos by Ann Wallace

Over the years many British destinations have appeared in the pages of TravelScoop: ideas for England, Ireland and Scotland ... but very little on Wales. This is strange because Wales has much to offer and is a beautiful part of the world. So here you are: news of a lovely base in Carmarthenshire and another story on a short tour to Wales from London. We hope you enjoy reading the stories, and we hope you will include Wales in your UK travels soon.

You stir, stretch and yawn. You open your eyes and blink. For a moment you think you are still dreaming. For there, before your eyes, lies the quintessential rural Welsh scene. Green rolling hills outlined with hedgerows and dotted with ancient trees rise above the morning mists that swirl in the valleys. Sheep are grazing quietly in every field and a tidy white farm house in the middle distance is catching the early sun's rays. Trees nearby rustle in the day's first breezes while, beside your own stone terrace, blue tits and golden finches are chattering in a large rosemary bush and the crimson blooms of an immense fuchsia tumble over a low stone wall. You have just awoken in the coach house at Mandinam.

Mandinam is a wonderful 300-year-old property in the Towy Valley of Carmarthenshire in South Wales. Its name means ‘untouched holy place’ ... an apt name for a property that alone makes a journey to this region worthwhile. There Daniella and Marcus Lampard are waiting to welcome you to their historic home where you can stay in the lovely en suite room in the main house or request, as I did, the spacious suite in the ancient Coach House. Here one immediately feels like a family friend. Slip into Daniella’s kitchen, take a place at her enormous oak table and chat about your breakfast fancies, the history of Mandinam and your plans for the coming day. Marcus is happy to provide Ordnance Survey maps of the area (a great boon when exploring the tiny Welsh lanes and byways) and plenty of tips and anecdotes.

The region has plenty to offer visitors, but I suspect for your first day you may choose to relax at Mandinam, to enjoy the lovely gardens and pond or wander through the estate’s 400 acres of parkland and woodlands, home to badgers, otters, many bird species – including hawks – and a display of wildflowers. Half of the acreage is grazing land for sheep and the other half is a woodland conservation area, for which a Gold Medal has been won at the Royal Welsh Show. The River Bran runs through the property and can be fished. A walk to the top of



The coach house at Mandinam



the gentle rise in a nearby field affords 360° views ... beauty lies in every direction.

Although described as a B&B, you may, in fact, have all meals at Mandinam, including teas featuring Daniella’s baked goods. Daniella is a superb cook and will provide lunch in her farmhouse kitchen or pack you a picnic. And then there’s dinner! Crimson walls and fine British art, rich Eastern rugs on polished floors and an antique table and sideboard are the order of the day here. On summer evenings the light lingers in the gardens beyond the French windows, in chillier months candlelight will cast a spell over your dinner here. Daniella will discuss the menu with you beforehand; she may suggest the tasty local lamb and describe the vegetables and fruits currently available from her garden, or she will accommodate any dietary requests you may have. On another night you may care to sample one of the local pubs or restaurants ... the Lampards will point you in the right direction.

After dinner at Mandinam you may choose to take your coffee (and perhaps a nip of Welsh whisky!) in the Lampard’s sitting room. If you haven’t already seen this room on your exploration of the property, you’re in for a surprise, for this room is quite unlike any of the antique-filled rooms in the rest of the house. Here you will find examples of Marcus’s art: not only paintings, but also fabulous rugs made in China from his own designs. His works - riots of colour, influenced, Marcus says, by Paul Klee and Robert Delaunay – have been exhibited in Wales, England and Italy. They dominate the comfortable sitting room of Mandinam, complemented by pink velvet sofas where, if the evening is chilly, a fire will be flickering in the fireplace and your comfort is ensured.

If you stay in the Coach House, just steps from the main house, you will find an enormous space just for you: a spacious shower and dressing room, a sitting area warmed if necessary by a Norwegian log stove, comfy chairs, pretty rugs, beamed ceiling and stone walls, fresh flowers and good books on the shelves. There are facilities for a little self-catering, if you so wish, and you’re sure to want to keep a drink or two in the fridge to enjoy on your own little patio. The comfortable bed is vast and it is from there that you will enjoy the beautiful view described above when you wake. It the sort of place – comfy and attractive but unpretentious – that makes you wish, immediately upon entering, that you could stay for a long time. Perhaps you will.

Mandinam is located between the villages of Llandeilo and Llandovery. A car is a must here, for once you have explored your new home and some of its extensive grounds you will want to set out to explore this lovely region. The hedgerow-lined narrow lanes may at first seem a bit of a challenge, but they are so quiet you may travel for miles without encountering another vehicle and, when you do, everyone is most courteous. You may get a little bit lost, but you will enjoy it and eventually find your way 'home' with the help of those wonderful Ordnance Survey maps.

Llandeilo marks the westernmost point of that renowned area known as the Brecon Beacons National Park, some 520 sq. miles of some of the most spectacular and distinctive upland in southern Britain. Here you will find the Black Mountains, moorlands, forests, valleys, waterfalls, lakes, caves and gorges with almost unlimited opportunities for hiking, guided walks, fabulous drives, birdwatching and more. Their website shown below lists all the information centres spread around the area where you can learn all there is to see and do in the region.

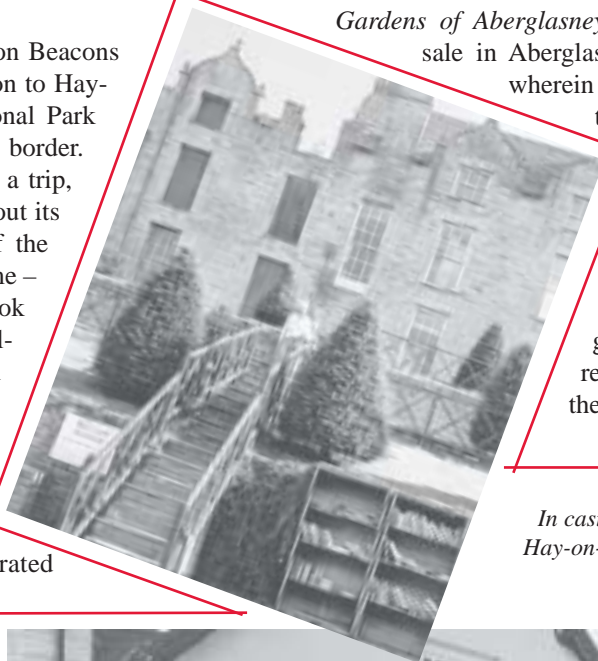
It's a glorious drive over the high Brecon Beacons from Mandinam via the lively town of Brecon to Hay-on-Wye, the easternmost point of the National Park region and just a stroll to the Welsh/English border. The quaint but busy village of Hay is worth a trip, but book-lovers shouldn't get too excited about its claim to be the secondhand-book centre of the world. Sure, it probably qualifies for this name – there are literally dozens of secondhand book stores here, complete with a keyed map available everywhere – but the majority of them seem to have offerings that can be found almost anywhere: old Dickens paperbacks, detective novels and so on. Perhaps I am being unfair, as the guide/pamphlet lists 'antique prints', 'restoration of old books', 'important collections', 'fine illustrated and academic books' and so on. Perhaps a longer visit than a few hours is required. As it was, I browsed for a while, bought a couple of 'remainders', and retired to a lively local pub for a pint and a bite of lunch.

Which reminds me, as you drive from village to village in Wales you will not go thirsty or hungry. There are welcoming pubs and appealing little restaurants everywhere, most of which proudly offer local and/or organic produce.

The county of Carmarthenshire is known as the 'Garden of Wales' and it's not hard to understand why, for this region is a garden lover's paradise. Unfortunately on my all-too-brief visit I didn't have time to visit the new but already renowned National Botanic

Garden of Wales at Middleton Hall, about 12 miles from Mandinam, build to celebrate the new millennium in the United Kingdom. But do please browse their fine website before your trip to Wales and I'm sure it will be placed high on your list of things to see and do. Instead, because my time was limited, I decided to visit the small but unusual garden at Aberglasney, known as a "garden lost in time".

The nine gardens of Aberglasney were first mentioned in writings of the 15th century, but they are believed to date back to the 7th. For most of the past half century, however, they had been left to decay, disappearing under a shroud of Japanese knotweed, yew, box and ivy and hidden from sight until an ambitious restoration project started to reveal, restore and rebuild them. The BBC has made a programme about the gardens and now they are almost restored to their former glory, and contain a delightful restaurant for lunch on the terrace, an appealing gift store and two cottages for rent. Garden and book lovers alike will delight in the volume *A Garden Lost in Time: the Mystery of the Ancient Gardens of Aberglasney* by Penny David, on sale in Aberglasney's gift store (£10) wherein you will be interested to read that the many fine photographs in the book were taken by Canadian photographer Kathy de Witt, who photographed the derelict gardens and then recorded each stage of their restoration. The gar-



fine photographs in the book were taken by Canadian photographer Kathy de Witt, who photographed the derelict gardens and then recorded each stage of their restoration. The gar-

In castles and quaint cottages ... Hay-on-Wye is full of book shops!





A corner of Abergasney Gardens showing the restaurant terrace

dens are just a short drive from Llandeilo, just off the A.40.

Of course this is only a sampling of all that South Wales has to offer. Everywhere you go you will find villages ranging from austere to pretty, handsome towns, fine walks, wildlife, gardens and wildflowers, festivals, sheep-dog trials, castles, unusual shops (many specializing in the woollen goods for which Wales is famous) and much more. Base yourself at Mandinam, pray that the rain gods who love this land (and make it beautiful) will go elsewhere during your stay and be prepared to let Wales surprise and delight you.

Some details ...

For tourist information for the whole county of Carmarthenshire, including details of lots more gardens, visit the **Carmarthenshire Tourist Association's** website: www.tourlink.co.uk. For those without internet access, the *Visitor Guide to Carmarthenshire* can be obtained from the tourist office at 62 King Street, Carmarthen, Wales SA31 1BA, tel: [011 44] 1267 220 366, fax: 220 388.

For local information on the region surrounding Mandinam, the **Llandeilo Tourist Information Centre** is located at Crescent Road Car Park, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6HN tel: 1558 824226, www.aboutbritain.com/towns/Llandeilo.asp or enter Llandeilo in your search engine and you'll find lots of links.

For details on all the **Brecon Beacons National Park** has to offer visit www.brecon-beacons.com and www.brecon-beacons.org

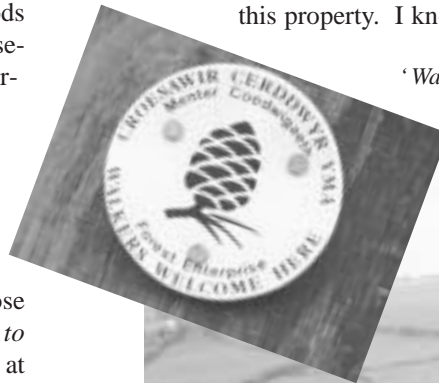
National Botanic Garden of Wales: www.gardenofwales.org.uk/

Aberglasney Gardens: www.aberglasney.org. Admission £6 or less (£1 = approx. C\$2.30), open every day except Christmas.

Getting to South Wales: you can drive to this area from

Heathrow or Gatwick Airports in about four hours (very much "about", depending on traffic), most of it on the M4. The bridge across the Bristol Channel is spectacular (you may like to have your camera ready); the traffic around Newport and Cardiff can be awful ... especially in rush hour. The industrial scenery on this stretch is also pretty dismal ... but fear not, beauty awaits you! Alternatively you may like to consider flying in to Exeter in England's west-country county of Dorset and making your way via rural routes into Wales. **Air Transat** flies to both Gatwick and Exeter and this was my airline of choice.

Mandinam's address is Llangadog, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 9LA, tel: 1550 777 368, e-mail: info@mandinam.co.uk, www.mandinam.co.uk. This property is also listed in Alastair Sawday's *Special Places to Stay: British Bed and Breakfast* which I mentioned in connection with my Harrogate stay in last month's edition of TS. The website map is useful as the title of this article is accurate ... this is a *hidden gem* ... or Daniella or Marcus will give you detailed directions if you e-mail them. Double room rates £70, single £40, lunch from £7.50, dinners with wine between £15 and £25. And please visit *TravelScoop's* website for lots of photos of this property. I know you'll enjoy! 🏠



'Walkers Welcome Here' signs are a frequent sight in Wales



A SHORT TOUR OF WALES

by Carrie Toomey

I had heard about the Backroads Touring Company several times and, in fact, one of my daughters had taken a two week trip to France with them several years ago and simply loved the whole experience. So in the Fall of last year, knowing I was to be by myself in the UK for a while, I thought I would try one of the Backroads 4 day – 3 night tours to find out how I liked them, with a view to possibly going for a longer trip another time. I was completely delighted with the tour I took. It was more like travelling with a few friends than the ordered got-to-be-at-a-certain-place-at-a-certain-time crowd.

The land-only cost for this 3 night – 4 day tour this year is £425 double or £445 single (about C\$1,008 and \$1,056 respectively). I initially thought the tour a little expensive, but discovered it was well worth the cost. It includes pick up from a selection of London hotels (or an extra £10 per pick up from an alternative location), the four full days of touring, driver/guide, three nights' accommodation in a lovely B&B, dinner each night and all entrance fees. The only additional costs were lunch and alcoholic beverages.

The Brick House Country Guest House at Redwick near Newport, Gwent, was our accommodation for all three nights, so no constant packing and unpacking. It was a nice old Georgian house given over completely to guests, as the owners lived across the quiet country road in a large house of their own. The welcoming owner, Chris Park, was always ready with a cup of tea and the breakfasts were excellent. The rooms were all en suite and very comfortable with views across the quiet fields of Wales.

True to their advertising policy, we used country roads to visit a variety of appealing destinations. This list included such places as Wordsworth's famous Tintern Abbey; the ruined castle at Chepstow; Llandaff Cathedral, with its strong ties to the Pre-Raphaelites, and the town of Llantrisant, with a small but interesting craft centre and its 19th century local eccentric, Dr. William Price. The museum of Welsh Life close to Cardiff was a special treat. One evening we went to listen to a rehearsal by one of the men's choirs for which Wales is so famous, and another day were the only visitors to the Roman Amphitheatre and museum at Caerleon.

Wales was one of the main coal mining areas in the British Isles. Although most of the mines are now closed, it is possible for visitors to go down what were, not so long ago, working mines to see what it was like. The Big Pit Mining Museum at Blaenafon is run by ex-miners who take every precaution to ensure the safety of their visitors.

For example, all items with batteries such as watches and cameras had to be removed and left behind before we descended the 90 metres into the mine, due to the possibility of starting a fire with the volatile coal dust. We wore hard hats with lamps on the front and 11 lbs of safety equipment on our backs, children included. Going down crammed into the old metal cage was the first taste of the miners' life. Accompanied by our knowledgeable guide, who was once a miner himself, we went on a walking tour along the shafts, through fire doors and up to the coal face passing the stalls where the pit ponies lived. This was an interesting and enlightening experience as we tried to imagine the unpleasant life the miners lived.

On our last day we crossed back into England and visited the National Trust Village of Lacock, which is so well preserved it is often used for period films. We also crossed part of Salisbury Plain to Avebury (near Stonehenge), with its own ancient stones in circles and apparent avenues. It's perhaps not as spectacular as Stonehenge, but completely accessible ... one can walk through the fields to admire and touch history. We then visited the town of Marlborough before heading back into London, where I was dropped off at Victoria Station as requested.

Backroads Touring uses a minibus for their tours, and will only take 10 or 11 people. As it turned out, we were only three people plus the guide. Because of this we were able to enjoy the tour in the comfort of a large station wagon. Our guide's name was Larry Moran; born in Canada who now lives in the UK with his British wife. He was extremely knowledgeable and we couldn't have asked for a better guide. We had lunch in all sorts of fascinating pubs, stopped for coffee as the mood took us, saw out-of-the-way places and truly travelled the backroads. Nothing could have been more enjoyable.

Backroads Touring Co. Ltd, 14A New Broadway, London W5 2XA, UK, tel. [011 44] 20 8566, fax: 20 8566 5457, e-mail: info@backroadstouring.co.uk, www.backroadstouring.co.uk

For independent reservations at the **Brick House Country Guest House**, Redwick, Nr. Newport, Gwent, NP26 3DX, tel: 1633 880230, fax. 01633 882441, e-mail: brickhouse@compuserve.com, website: www.altourism.com/uk/brickh.html

The Big Pit Mining Museum, National Mining Museum of Wales, www.nmgw.ac.uk/www.php/bigpit/

Carrie Toomey is a TravelScoop subscriber who lives in Kingston, Ontario

The Berkshires: America's Premier Cultural Region

by Ted and Judy van der Veen

Where can you find several venues for the performing arts, world class museums, galleries, historic sites, gardens and mountain scenery to boot? Less than a day's drive from Toronto or Montreal in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts, that's where. The area, which covers the north-south length of Massachusetts bordering on New York State, and less than 50 miles wide, has great natural beauty and an amazing variety of cultural attractions. While many of the dance, theatre and music offerings are presented only in the summer, other attractions are open year round. We spent the week beginning on Labour Day weekend, 2004, here, seeing what we deemed the top attractions.

Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is located in Lenox, about the midpoint of the region. While classical music is the main theme for July and August, Labour Day weekend is the Jazz Festival. Last year's performers included Dave Brubeck and Harry Conniff Jr. Here one can opt for reserved seating undercover or lawn seating outdoors. The grounds open two hours before the performance; people bring blankets, lawn chairs, picnics and wine, creating a summer fair atmosphere. On a bright sunny day or warm summer evening, nothing could be finer. However, food service within the grounds is quite limited. This lawn arrangement allows for reasonably-priced tickets and they are normally available at the last minute, too, for those who cannot plan ahead or want to judge the weather first.


Just south of Lenox is Stockbridge, home of the **Norman Rockwell Museum**. This is where Rockwell spent his last years and many of his famous illustrations were done here. Take the free guided tour; then linger to look at the details and refresh your memory of important societal changes that occurred in mid-20th century America and the world. Just a few minutes' walk away is the cabin that was Rockwell's studio. To the north, almost at the Vermont border, in Williamstown, is the **Clark Art Institute**, once the private collection of Sterling and Francine Clark. Their favourite period was the Impressionists, although they did collect a few Old Masters (Dutch and Italian) and some early American artists. Their poster says it all: "Sargent, Revere, Renoir, Homer, Van Gogh, Remington, Cassatt, Monet, Gauguin – what's in a name?" We were thrilled by the number of Renoir paintings, and some lovely bronze figures by Degas as well as a few of his paintings.

Just outside Pittsfield is the **Hancock Shaker Village** where one can learn about the religious movement that flourished here throughout the 19th century. Here you soon

become aware that this was not just a "quaint" religious sect who dressed in old-fashioned clothes and believed in celibacy. Leaving the religious aspects aside, the Shakers were in the forefront of agricultural reform and were quick to embrace technological change. They were the first to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers expressly for seed, and introduced packet seeds to the market. Many of the workshops are "manned" every day in the summer and on weekends, making it possible to see how their crafts and machinery were produced. Try to take in several of the "events" highlighted on the daily schedule and be sure to attend the Shaker Music presentation. If you have your ticket validated before you leave, you may return for free admission once more within 8 days. If, like us, you want to see everything and also watch the various videos shown in several buildings, you will need the second day. The on-site cafeteria serves excellent soup and sandwich lunches.

This is only a sampling of the many cultural events here. Others include **MASS MoCA** (Museum of Contemporary Art), **Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival**, Herman Melville's home **Arrowhead** where *Moby Dick* was written, **Shakespeare & Company**, **Berkshire Choral Festival**, Edith Wharton's **The Mount** Estate and Gardens, **Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival** and **Barrington Stage Company**. The list goes on: a scenic railway museum, a papermaking museum and several film festivals. And for those who enjoy the outdoors there are hiking trails, cycling, golf, fishing – and, of course, lots of shopping.

Accommodations run the gamut: B&B's on farms or in small inns, cottages, cabins and campgrounds, motels, hotels, resorts and timeshares. We had a timeshare exchange at Vacation Village in the Berkshires, on a mountaintop overlooking Jiminy Peak Ski Resort near the hamlet of Hancock. While the units were nicely appointed, the only on-site activities were a fitness room, indoor swimming pool and outdoor hot tub. However, our days were so full that suited us fine: the hot tub won hands down! A leisurely soak, some interesting conversation with fellow guests, then a glass of wine on the balcony of our unit as we watched the sunset was just heavenly.

To contact the Berkshire Visitors Bureau for their comprehensive Visitors' Guide: tel: 1 800 237 5747, e-mail: bvb@berkshires.org, www.berkshires.org. It contains information on cultural and recreational activities and attractions, lodgings and restaurants, and more, with internet links. If Tanglewood is your special interest call 1 888 266 1200 or www.bso.org for details of the coming summer season. 



The town of Rovinj

Discovering Croatia

story and photos by Jennifer Hastie

A family wedding took us to the Croatian peninsula of Istria last summer. Istria lies to the south-east of Venice, across the Adriatic Sea from Italy. Once a part of Italy, Istria and the surrounding islands resemble that country in topography, housing construction and culture. The area is beautiful and, thankfully, the war did not touch this part of Croatia.

Because of the wedding, we found ourselves in Nedescina, a very small hill town near the town of Labin. As with many of the villages in this area, it is possible to rent apartments from the local people for a very reasonable price. But as might be expected, the accommodation will not be 4-star (particularly in the area of maintenance and plumbing) but there is opportunity to prepare meals and do laundry as you would back home. We thoroughly enjoyed being able to manage our needs in this way. As well, the cost of accommodation is much lower than in the urban or resort areas. For our accommodation, four of us paid about \$20 each per night.

When we weren't "home" for supper, we always ate in Fides Verbanac's tiny restaurant on the main street which consisted of a few tables on a patio protected from the sun by umbrellas. The sign outside her restaurant says "Klancic Konoba." She served us superb homemade food, waiting on us as she would guests in her own home. We had the best of both worlds: a restaurant menu to choose from and restaurant hours but the bonus of quality home-cooked food. Prices were also reasonable. For example, we would typically pay \$25 for two people for a full meal with wine. Consistent with Fides' wish to treat her customers as family, at one point I was suffering from a toothache and Fides

produced an enormous bowl of comforting homemade bean soup for my supper. The food in this part of Croatia is very similar to Italian food, with lots of seafood, pastas and salads to choose from. As you travel east in Croatia, the Slavic influence becomes more apparent in the food. One interesting feature of food offered here in the small village restaurants is that it will probably be organic. Loading their vegetables and meat with chemicals and the mass production of foodstuffs seems to have escaped this culture, at least for now! And the water is considered safe to drink on the Istrian peninsula.

We were able to shop at the local stores and, although few people speak any English, they would try very hard to figure out what we would like to buy. A good bottle of wine cost from C\$5 - \$10, a large loaf of freshly baked bread is about \$1.50. A coffee in a village bar would cost between 60¢ and \$1, while splurging for a *latte* would be \$1.50. Our *gelati* at a road-stand in the country would cost under \$1 per cone. We found that we were able to use our limited Italian to communicate quite successfully, but even if we hadn't had any Italian vocabulary, I am sure that we would have managed just as well. We did make a point of learning four Croatian words: please, thank you, good morning and good night!

Once you get to the tourist places, prices do rise. However, they are still considerably cheaper than the prices in Italy.

spectacular. There were only a handful of tourists here and, unfortunately, no restaurant to serve us. But good tourist services can be found in the spectacular coastal town of Rovinj on the west coast of the peninsula. As with many other towns, Rovinj is built on a hill, the church at the top, village accommodation through the centre and a well developed harbour for fish or pleasure boats.

The town of Pula on the west coast is well worth seeing. It has a huge Roman amphitheatre from the 1st century B.C., the 6th largest in the world and built to house 22,000 people. Under the amphitheatre, where the lions and victims were kept, there is now a very good museum with artifacts and explanations of the Roman occupation of the Istria and other Mediterranean areas. Istria was considered to be a bread basket for the Roman Empire at that time.

Pula also has a huge harbour, complete with ferry service to Venice. We do not recommend this trip. We were crammed into airplane-type seats in a hot, sweat-filled room, subjected to on-going tourist pitches for day-tours through Venice. The ferry takes 2½ hours to Venice, and the cost for a one-way trip was \$75. Our advice: make separate time for Venice.

Opatija, on the east coast of Istria, is a luxurious-resort, sea-side town. Prices here would be your usual tourist fare. Many hotels have been converted from the grand villas which graced the edge of the sea from the Austro-Hungarian rule during the 200 years prior to World War I.

The food in this part of Croatia is very similar to Italian food, with lots of seafood, pastas and salads to choose from.

There is much to see on this peninsula, but it is necessary to rent a car because there are no trains and the bus service is sporadic. We rented a five-passenger car with air conditioning at the Zagreb airport from a rental company called "Rental d.o.o." The cost was \$825 for 10 days, unlimited mileage. Although we arrived at Zagreb airport at 11:00 p.m., the company representative was there to complete the rental agreement with us at that time. This car company can be reached by e-mail at rental@st.hinet.hr, fax: [011 385] 21 322 117.

Driving in Istria is similar to driving in the countryside elsewhere in Europe – narrow roads, frequent high bush on either side of the road and fast local drivers. Istria, however, has taken a leaf from Italy's book and constructed a wonderful superhighway, complete with 17 tunnels, from Zagreb to where we turned off the highway, at Vranja. This "tunnel-highway" has tolls which cost \$21 each way.

As we used our car to explore the countryside, the wonderful scent of rosemary and lavender would come wafting through the windows. The cicadas were a constant, serious noise. We discovered a beautifully-kept picturesque hill town of Pican which had many buildings from the 17th and 18th centuries. You must park your car and walk through the village. The view of the surrounding countryside below is

There are many other towns on the peninsula that are considered very picturesque and historical, but family commitments prevented us from doing more exploring. However, we were fortunate we chose to spend a day on the island of Cres, off the east coast of Istria. We took a local car ferry from Brestova. The ferry runs hourly during the summer season and costs \$20 per car and \$3.25 per person. Cres Island is enchanting, with spectacular views and beautiful little seaside villages. Two of them, Osor and Cres town, offer car-free streets that are well kept and bordered with flowers, lots of small shops, enchanting churches and beautiful little harbours. During the Roman occupation, or perhaps even earlier, the island of Cres was "cut in half" by the construction of a short canal at Osor, making navigation around the island by boat much easier. I noticed that Osor has campsites right beside the canal within walking distance of the church and village.

Two other island towns, Mali Losinj and Veli Losinj are also very beautiful, but the presence of tourism is much more noticeable. It is possible to take a ferry from Pula to Mali Losinj. Beli, a town on the north side of Cres, has a Griffin Vulture Sanctuary. These vultures, the second largest birds in the world, traditionally feed on dead sheep. They are endangered because their food source is dwindling

as the sheep farmers move to the city to find easier and better-paying jobs. The Sanctuary is well worth seeing. We were able to observe at close distance one of the birds that is being rehabilitated. The Sanctuary is in dire need of funds as they are not government sponsored. Volunteer workers are welcomed here.

There are many other islands to explore in Croatia, as well as many towns and cities to see. We decided to leave the Dalmatian peninsula for another time, given the heat of the summer and the crowds at Dubrovnik and Split, an area that has long been popular with European tourists. If you travel to this area in the shoulder or winter seasons, the heat will be gone, and the prices will have fallen by as much as 30%.

There are not many ATM's in the non-touristy areas of Istria, so it is advisable to come with travellers' cheques and Euros. You can change your Croatian Kunas back into Euros/American dollars/British pounds at the currency exchange in the Zagreb airport. This exchange must be done before you leave the country, as



Mali Losinj on Cres Island

exchanges in other countries will not accept the Kuna.

In Nedescrina, on the Istrian peninsula, we stayed at "Apartmani Fides", tel: [011 385] 52 865 413, fax: 52 865 413, e-mail: fides.verbanac@pu.htnet.hr or visit the website: www.istra.com/ps/labin-fides.htm. Fides does not speak English, but we did not find this to be a problem (and the website is in basic English). However, she is fluent in German, Italian, Croatian, and has some Spanish and French. Regarding finding other similar accommodation as you drive and tour, I would recommend just travelling through these small villages and looking for signs. I do not believe that the local homeowners do much formal advertising of their apartments/rooms for rent, but we saw many

signs out on the road indicating there was accommodation in many of the small towns that we drove through. Do go ... before this lovely part of the world is 'discovered' by North Americans. 🇺🇸

Jennifer Hastie is a TravelScoop subscriber who lives in Victoria, BC

Explore Croatia in print and on-line ...

Just a few weeks after we received these two reports on Croatia from our subscribers, we received a very nice message from a woman named Jeanne Oliver. Jeanne is not a *TravelScoop* subscriber, but she has been covering Croatia for Lonely Planet guides since 1996 and her latest edition – the third, named simply *Croatia* – has just been published (296 pp, 16 in colour, 56 maps, \$28.95). And Jeanne was also proud to tell us that Croatia has been voted "Destination of the Year" by the Lonely Planet staff. "It makes sense," wrote Jeanne. "Croatia has great beaches, 1185 islands, a varied culture, tasty food and a wealth of outdoor activities. Sailors, seniors, backpackers, solo travellers and honeymooners are flocking to this, the Mediterranean's newest hotspot, which still provides excellent value for money." In addition to writing the guidebook, Jeanne has also just launched her own website: www.croatiatraveller.com. Pay a visit to this excellent site and explore. Here you'll find itinerary ideas, top sights, best beaches, practical tips, history, culture and food as well as ferry schedules, flight information, car rental companies and driving distances. You can even contemplate buying property here. Many are! Croatia currently has the largest growth market in Europe with property values rising by 30% last year.

Senior Backpacking in Southern Croatia

by Carol Mooney

Last year my husband, Mike, and I had a ‘vagabond’ October vacation along the southern coast and Adriatic islands of Croatia. From the sea, our usual approach to most towns, the slate-coloured hillsides with tufts of weather-beaten trees did indeed look like spotted Dalmatian dogs. We wondered which came first – the coast or the canine!

We travelled with backpacks on ferries and excursion boats, on buses and by hitching car rides, or by rented bicycles and on foot. We never had our own car, nor did we ever take a taxi. It was close at times, but we held on! Good weather helped.

The main season for the Adriatic islands is May-October; other times are chancy for weather and closures. But going in October means fewer tourists and off-season rates. Tourism is Croatia’s cash cow and they are milking it now. Prices are reasonable but rising. It is safe and clean and people are very hospitable. We booked accommodation ahead but, often, just one or two days before arrival. Hotel people were more helpful in finding rooms in the next town than tourist bureau personnel, who still seem to be learning their jobs. The currency is the *kuna* but many places accept euros. Bank machines were readily accessible.

Prior to our departure, we read through the Rough Guide to Croatia and Footprint Croatia and consulted a friend who had an acquaintance living on the Adriatic islands. Thirty years ago, we had visited Dubrovnik, Zagreb and other parts of the former Yugoslavia but had never been to Split or the islands. We designed our trip with a view to staying in a few different places, but not too many. Walking, biking, history, meeting Balkan people and relaxation were our goals. If you go, I don’t think you’ll be disappointed.

Itinerary and transportation

We flew from Vienna to Split on 3 October. The airport bus (\$7 ... all prices Canadian and, for transportation, per person) took us downtown, close to the old city and ferry terminal, where we had a 10-minute seaside walk to our hotel. With a plan to return to Split, we headed off the next day on a catamaran passenger ferry to Bol, a small, scenic town on Brac island. The ferry took an hour and cost \$5.00 each. After three nights on Brac, we headed off on an excursion boat to Hvar Town on the island of Hvar. That trip took two hours and cost \$15.00. On Saturday, after two nights in Hvar town, we took the free shuttle car from the hotel to the

bus terminal. The bus from Hvar town to Starigrad was \$3.00. The same-day coastal ferry from Starigrad to Dubrovnik was \$11.00. Finally, on 11 October after two nights in Dubrovnik, we took a bus to Split for \$23.00. The next day we flew from Split back to Vienna. To check ferry schedules, use www.jadrolinija.hr. For short ferry distances, we bought tickets a day ahead at the terminal.

Accommodation

In **Split**, we stayed at the modern Hotel Marjan, tel [011 385] 21 399 211, www.hotel-marjan.com, at a cost of \$180 for two with buffet breakfast. This was our most expensive place, and we spent an extra \$20 for the great harbour view, especially at night. Unattractive from the outside, the hotel looks much better inside.

In **Bol** we enjoyed the old Hotel Kastel, tel: 21 635 995, www.bolnabracu.com/eng/kastil.htm at \$80 with buffet breakfast included. With a panoramic seaview, proximity to ferry dock and central for everything, it was much cheaper in the shoulder-season. For our room in July or August, guests would book months ahead as tiny Bol is inundated with tourists in the summer.

At the Hotel Podstine in **Hvar**, we had our most luxurious seaside room: two balconies, lots of space, swimming and fine dining right on site. The cost was \$120, buffet breakfast included.

Based on a recommendation from the desk person at Hotel Podstine, we booked an en suite room in a home in Dubrovnik. Villa Milica cost us \$64, no breakfast. The room was clean and basic and we had a 15 minute walk to the Pile gate in the walls of Dubrovnik.

Food

We like to frequent open-air markets for picnic supplies, and small-town Croatia provided many opportunities to purchase local fruit, cheeses, sausages and wine. Finding a tranquil beach, bench or park for our lunches in October proved easy. In Split, we ate in the gardens of Sustipan, shaded by cypress trees, overlooking the Adriatic. The seaside park benches in Hvar town, Bol, and Split provided welcome respites on our walking days. For restaurant meals, coastal Croatia is known for excellent seafood risottos. Restaurants often offer singers, seaside views or *al fresco* dining in narrow cobblestone passages. The Sesame restaurant in Dubrovnik, situated outside the Pile gate on the way up the hill to Lapad, provides hearty vegetarian dishes. Konoba Kod Joze, serving authentic Croatian cuisine in Split, is worth trying to find. It’s located in a narrow street behind

... continued on page 18

Keeping healthy when we travel is of paramount importance. TravelScoop asked the Canadian Physiotherapy Association for some advice and exercise suggestions for those on the road, rails or in the air. Here are their recommendations. If you would like this document sent to you by e-mail so that you can print it out to keep in your carry-on bag and share with others, please drop me a line at: ann@thetravelsociety.com

PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES ...

Travel Fit Tips from the Canadian Physiotherapy Association

Whatever the mode of travel, there are a number of problems that may arise from sitting in a confined space. Sitting immobile for prolonged periods of time can put considerable stress on muscles and joints. This can lead to feeling stiff, cramped and sore with a sense of fatigue after the journey.

On long flights, circulation may be compromised in some people and clots (or deep vein thrombus) may form, leading to a serious and sometimes fatal outcome if the clot blocks a major blood vessel.

Good posture plays a key role in the prevention of back pain and excessive strain on the joints, ligaments and veins. However, any posture, no matter how good it is, can become uncomfortable over an extended period of time. Therefore, it is important to make frequent posture changes to help minimize discomfort.

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association recommends the following posture tips:

When travelling by car, wear a seatbelt and keep headrest lowered to a position that is in the centre of the back of your head. In a plane or train, adjust the seat to an upright position so that your seat is at the back of the chair. If the hollow in your back is not supported, try a lumbar roll or rolled up T-shirt;

Keep shoulders in line with trunk and upper back to allow for even loading through the spine;

Hips and knees should be as close to a 90° angle as possible to maintain good spinal alignment. Depending on transportation policy, a backpack or other piece of carry-on luggage can act as a footrest to bring legs and knees to a comfortable height;

Position the arm rest so your elbows are bent to 90°. If your arm rest is too low, use a small pillow under your forearm.

Shift your weight frequently to reduce prolonged

pressure points when sitting, including moving hips and knees. If you're driving, change the angle of the steering wheel at rest stops as a way to change your sitting position.

According to the British Medical Association, in a report entitled "The Impact of Flying on Passenger Health", travellers should occasionally walk or stand in the plane (depending on airline policy) or perform seated exercises, which have been shown to increase blood flow in the deep veins of the legs.

Canadian physiotherapists recommend doing one exercise from each of the following groups before, during and after the journey, to maintain good general circulation, and decrease stiffness by moving the joints. Slowly stretch until a gentle tension is felt in the muscle (this should not be painful). **Take relaxed breaths and do each exercise slowly. Repeat each stretch at least twice on both sides.**

Head and neck

Chin Tuck – tuck in chin, keeping head level, move backwards creating a double chin.

Head Turn – turn head over right shoulder and back to centre.

Head Tilt – bring ear towards shoulder without turning head or lifting shoulder.

Neck Bend – tuck in chin and slowly bring towards chest. Slowly return to start position.

Neck Extension – raise chin to ceiling and look up as far as you can. Slowly return to start position.

Shoulders

Shoulder Stretch – link fingers together and push up with palms facing upwards.

Shoulders Back – squeeze shoulder blades together. Expand rib cage with each breath.

Shoulders Forward – cross arms across chest and hold back of shoulders with hands. Hug shoulders forward so that a stretch is felt between shoulder blades.

Shoulder Rolls – Shrug shoulders. Make circles with one shoulder, then the other. Touch shoulder blades together and relax. Repeat three or four times.

Trunk

Body Twist – turn body and head to look over right shoulder. Reach left hand across the body to hold on to top right edge of chair. Repeat on opposite side.

Back Arch – arch back until pelvis tilts forward. Try to breath normally.

Back Slump – slump forwards and bring shoulders towards knees as far as comfortable. Keep stomach relaxed. Pelvis should tilt backwards.

Body Stretch – find suitable location and stand with feet shoulder-width apart and as tall as you can. Push hips forward without losing balance and reach arms straight above head, linking fingers with palms facing upwards.

Foot and ankle

Sitting Calf Stretch – keep left heel on floor, lift toes and the front of the foot as far off the floor as possible. Repeat on opposite side.

Foot Pumping – pump each foot several times, as if working a car accelerator, to bring back circulation to feet and ankles.

Heel Lifts – lean forward and rest elbows on knees. Keeping full weight on elbows, lift heels off the floor as

far as you can, keeping balls of feet in contact with floor. Gently lower down and repeat several times;

Ankle Circles – lift left foot off floor and pull upwards and at the same time roll foot inwards. Then push the foot downwards and roll it outwards. Repeat 20 times on each side.

For all seated stretches and exercises, sit tall in the seat with your ear, shoulder and hip roughly in line with each other, and feet slightly apart. Arms should be resting comfortably with your hands in your lap. Exercises should be performed on both sides of the body.

It is especially important to remember to exercise if using a laptop computer or doing other work while travelling. Many people become so engrossed that they fail to take a break for hours at a time and end up with pain and stiffness in the neck or hands upon reaching their destination.

Travel aids for Canadians with disabilities

The Access to Travel web site www.accesstotravel.gc.ca/main-e.asp provides information on accessible transportation and travel across Canada to make travelling an easier and more enjoyable experience for Canadians with disabilities. And the Canadian Physiotherapy Association's web site is www.physiotherapy.ca.

... continued from page 16

the old walls and features fresh seafood served by helpful, hospitable waiters. Dining *al fresco* in Hvar town with pedestrians strolling by our table, kittens scurrying by our feet and waiters brandishing trays of slippery freshly-caught fish was quite an “old Europe” experience.

Highlights/comments:

The beach at Bol was worth the trip. Zlatni Rat (Golden Cape) is a natural treasure. Shaped like a pudgy, pointed finger, the finely pebbled beach has shade trees dividing a family beach and an adult beach with a section for naturists. Its waters are warm, smooth and buoyant waters.

Try hiking to the highest point in the town. Either the peak at Bol (Vidova Gora – 778 meters) or the fortress, Spanjola at Hvar, gives new perspectives. In Split, we climbed the bell tower in the old town. Climbing the back streets behind the walls of Dubrovnik gave us a sweeping view of the entire walled city and off-shore islands. As we gazed seaward, we imagined the maritime adventures and conquests of the past.

Exploring the old town of Split, once the palace of Diocletian, is a must. Meandering through a maze of narrow warrens dividing shops and dwellings was fascinating. We

learned about the lore of amphorae, while touring the underground caverns gave an informative look into early Roman times.

Spending a day with a young, articulate Croatian couple and their baby from Zagreb broadened our views on Balkan identity. Their frank analysis of their past and future helped to dispel some of the myths of their culture.

Dubrovnik – we were glad we made a second visit, but will not choose to come again. Tourists swarm here, even in October. But as a walled city it has many distinctive features. Built on a large rocky island a short distance from the shore, the Old Town walls incorporate outcroppings, walk-ups, turrets and shops in the wall, all of which are restored and well-maintained..

In conclusion, the decision to re-discover southern Croatia by foot, sea and public transportation was a good one for us. Not only did we strengthen our legs but we enjoyed forming a brief relationship with the Balkan people and their picturesque land. 🇧🇪

Carol Mooney is a TravelScoop subscriber whose home is in Ayer's Cliff, PQ.

● **Alberta**

The friendly folk from Travel Alberta were in Toronto recently and I had a pleasant time chatting with them about all the province has to offer. In their party was Joseph Macdonald, ‘trail boss’ of **Home on the Range Adventure Tours**. They offer a wide range of escorted and fly/self-drive tours out of Calgary that include natural and historic sites, working guest ranches and B&B’s, aboriginal experiences, Rocky Mountain tours and more, all of which look great. They can be contacted at 1 866 760 8334 or via www.homeontherange.ca

Perhaps you, like many others, are a dedicated **bird watcher**. That would be another good reason for adding Alberta to your itinerary. Visit www.TravelAlbertaCentral.com, scroll down the home page and you’ll find a comprehensive article and lots of links of interest to birders. There are complete packages with bird and nature enthusiasts in mind, plus information on events such as the annual bird count at the end of May, spectacular birding locations and more. If you’d prefer to call for a travel guide that’s easy too: 1 800 ALBERTA.

● **British Columbia**

One of Canada’s leading educational retreat centres – **Hollyhock** – has a variety of relaxing, learning and expedition vacations at their centre on **Cortes Island** and on the nearby dramatic coast. Workshops include health and healing, yoga, meditation, writing, music and dance, painting and other visual arts, cooking, gardening, entrepreneurship and fundraising, media, environment and much more.

Their mandate is to “inspire, nourish and support people who are making the world better” but guests can merely enjoy Hollyhock without participating in any workshops if they wish. Programmes run from May until late October, or check out the great fall deals under ‘Island Time’. For your brochure call 1 800 933 6339 or visit www.hollyhock.ca

And for comprehensive information on travelling in BC call **Tourism BC** at 1 800 HELLO BC (or visit www.HelloBC.com) for your copies of their excellent free guides: *BC Escapes*, *Vacation Planner*, *Outdoor Adventure Guide* and *Approved Accommodation Guide*

● **Manitoba**

Need to add Manitoba to your list of provinces visited? Call **Travel Manitoba** and request their *Great Manitoba Getaways Guide* for lots of ideas and information, including specialized packages (Churchill Wilderness Encounter, Great White Bear Tours, Polar Trails, etc.). Other publications available include the *Great Outdoor Adventure Guide* and the *Accommodations Guide*. A call to 1 800 665 0040, ext. JK5 will bring you these publications, or visit travel-manitoba.com My colleagues at the tourist office especially recommend: ‘**Arts in the Wilderness Weekend**

Getaway’ (1 866 818 9989 or www.routesonthered.com) – a 2-night self-directed tour in **southern Manitoba**’s wild spaces visiting galleries, studios and antique shops with B&B accommodation, dinner for two and lots more; or for nature lovers the 6-day ‘**Birds, Bears and Belugas**’ trip to **Churchill** (mid-July to mid-August only) ... information from 1 888 ECO SEAL or www.churchillwild.com

● **Newfoundland**

For something completely different, how about staying in a lighthouse cottage on **Quirpon Island**, off the northernmost tip of Newfoundland? This location has the longest iceberg-viewing season in the province and here you can enjoy not only the passing icebergs but also whales. All meals are included in your stay here, together with the boat ride out to the island where you can sit and watch the ‘bergs, birds and whales or enjoy some hikes on the island. You can read all about it at www.linkumtours.com/inn.htm or call 1 877 254 6586. We are confident recommending this property to *TravelScoop* readers, not only because Editor Ann has met friendly owner Ed English, but also because the property has received outstanding praise in the international and national press: “One of the five top world’s most secluded destinations ... close to holiday perfection,” said the *Sunday Times* of England; while a writer in *National Geographic Adventure* declared, “I once paddled the entire Inside Passage, from Alaska’s ice-choked Glacier Bay to Puget Sound, but I’ve never seen anything like this.”

● **Nova Scotia**

The **Chanterelle Country Inn and Cottages on Cape Breton’s Cabot Trail** has received an environmental award from the Audubon Green Leaf Program. Looks like a good address to have when exploring this beautiful area. Check it out on line at www.chanterelleinn.com or contact the inn at 48678 Cabot Trail, Baddeck, NS B0E 1B0, tel: 1 866 2777 0577. Rooms from \$135 per night, cottages \$850 per week.

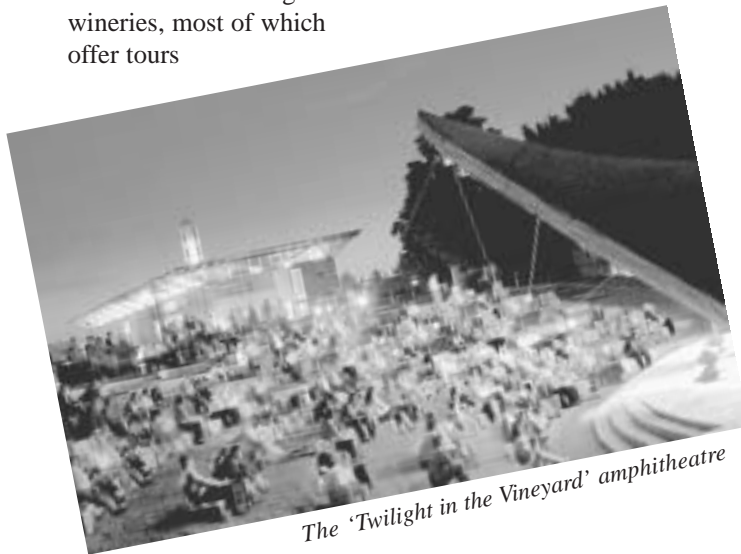
If your heritage is Scottish or Irish (or if you simply like a good time) you may like to plan to be in **Halifax** 2 – 4 June to celebrate the **Halifax Celtic Feis** ... a festival of music, dance, art, sport, genealogy and literary works. Visit www.halifaxcelticfeis.com for details.

● **Ontario**

“A lot of people might be intimidated by the thought of a canoe trip to see polar bears,” says John Langford of the **Paddling Ontario Alliance**, “but in fact almost anybody can do it.” If you’re up for this challenge, check the many offerings from Paddling Ontario – an alliance of 24 tourism operators who offer accommodation and unique canoe and kayaking packages ranging from weekend getaways to wilderness expeditions (which could include a stay at a 5-

star wilderness resort). Tel: 705 745 9343, www.paddlingontario.com

An evening at the theatre more your style? "Why, oh, why is there nothing in the United States to rival **Canada's Shaw Festival**?" wrote John Simon, theatre critic, in the *New York Magazine* last year. An accolade indeed. The **Stratford Festival** is no stranger to accolades either, and guides to both Festivals give far more than the theatre listings. Here you'll find accommodation suggestions (lots of B&B's), restaurants, other attractions and more. For the Shaw (Niagara-on-the-Lake) guide call 1 800 511 SHAW, www.shawfest.com and for Stratford call 1 800 561 SWAN or visit www.city.stratford.on.ca or www.stratfordfestival.ca Plays are not the only offering in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the summer. The region is renowned for its wineries, most of which offer tours



The 'Twilight in the Vineyard' amphitheatre

and tastings.

But state-of-the-art **Jackson-Triggs Winery**, just minutes from NOTL, offers more. Their '**Twilight in the Vineyard**' performing arts programmes are a delight (*I attended a performance last year and it was a memorable evening – Ed.*). Here guests can enjoy a pre-show tour of the winery before taking their seat in the open-air amphitheatre to enjoy a performance, glass of wine in hand and with a variety of gourmet snacks to look forward to in the intermission. This summer's line up includes Sarah Harmer, Melanie Doane, Spirit of the West, Matt Dusk, Veronica Tennant, Rex Harrington and Jean Stilwell. For tickets and information visit www.jacksontriggswinery.com or call 1 866 589 4637. Dinner and show packages at nearby Vintage Inns are also available. One of these performances, combined with a theatre visit, will make a wonderful week-end.

This summer's major art exhibition at the **National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa** is *Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and the Renaissance in Florence* (29 May – 5 September). This major exhibition will include over 100 paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints on loan from European galleries (including the Vatican and the Queen's

collection) and never before seen together. Ottawa is the only venue and information can be obtained from 1 800 319 ARTS or www.national.gallery.ca

● **Prince Edward Island (and Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Iles de la Madeleine, Québec and Iceland and Bermuda too!)**

Calling all walkers to investigate the programmes offered by **Scott Walking Adventures**, a company that specializes in taking very small groups off the beaten track on the Atlantic Coast of Canada (and in Iceland too). Guided tours for walkers and hikers emphasize nature, culture and heritage and they sound great. Full information at their excellent www.scottwalking.com or call 1 800 262 8644. they look good!

● **Québec**

Montréal, Québec City and the **Charlevoix** region are a delight in the summer, offering music of all kinds, festivals, exhibitions, gardens and, of course, great food. Now there's a specialist tour operator that is offering a series of packages for individual travellers who are interested in all of the above, especially music. **SN Tourisme Culturel** offers premium seating at concerts, backstage and 'meet the artists' visits, invitations to attend rehearsals and master classes, private concerts and private visits to visual artists' studios and lots more. To learn more, visit the English-language website www.QuebecArtsTours.com or call Sylvie Nadeau (the 'SN' of the company name) at 1 888 569 4040. She'll be delighted if you tell her you read about it in *TravelScoop*!

Rather enjoy some outdoor adventures on your Québec trip? You're in for a treat if you head to the beautiful **Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean** region, an area renowned for spectacular scenery and myriad adventures. The region has its own website at www.saguenaylacsaintjean.net or call 1 877 253 8387 for their brochures.

● **General News**

itravel2000 has launched a new website, www.itravelcanada.ca, featuring seasonal travel packages, flights, hotel and car reservations, accommodation listings and special event information. "We've seen a definite rise in interest from Canadians to travel around their own country. They're realizing that Canada is a fantastic destination – easy to get to, reasonably priced and jam-packed with exciting travel experiences," said Jonathan Carroll, president of itravel2000.

And for those travelling in Canada independently (or for those which wish to learn more about Canada), an interactive, web-based **Atlas of Canada** has recently been launched by **The Royal Canadian Geographical Society**. Visit www.canadiangeographic.ca/atlas/ and click on 'How to use this site' for information on maps, educational tools,

China ... Yangtze Spectacular

\$3,995 FOR 18 DAYS!

Departing 15 September & 20 October 2005

March, April, September, October 2006



Please call for the full itinerary

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!

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.

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES:

Departing:

Vancouver	\$3,995 pp/dbl
Victoria/Nanaimo/Kamloops	\$4,125 pp/dbl
Calgary/Edmonton	\$4,250 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,250 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$4,250 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,280 pp/dbl
Ottawa & Montreal	\$4,280 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec City/London	\$4,440 pp/dbl
St. John's	\$4,440 pp/dbl

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

Taxes and visas extra.

ADD-ON HONG KONG

4 days/3 nights \$1,100.00
Prices are subject to confirmation

Your tour costs includes:

- Round-trip transpacific air fares on **Japan Airlines or Air Canada**
- 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.



21 days

A Traveller's

Departing: 20 September 2005

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. 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 Cappadocia (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:

Toronto	\$5,900.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$5,975.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$5,975.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,145.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$6,145.00 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$6,145.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$6,145.00 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,075.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Prices are subject to confirmation

Only 8 spaces left
Fully escorted

Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic flights with Air Canada/Lufthansa
- 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
- All Taxes

Copper Canyon

Departing 20 May, 9 September and 7 October 2005

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

Air-inclusive prices:

Toronto, Ottawa & Montreal
Vancouver, Calgary, Halifax, Winnipeg

Single supplement \$600 (Sharing can be arranged.)

Prices are subject to confirmation

Please call for new lower prices

New lower prices!

Your tour includes:

- All air transportation on Mexicana
- Canadian domestic air
- Bilingual guides
- 8 nights first class accommodation
- All transfers, baggage handling & tips
- Meals as per the itinerary
- All train trips and tours as per the itinerary
- All taxes

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

Galapagos Islands and Ecuador

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

14 days departing 10 May, 7 June and 4 October 2005

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: Toronto \$6,589.00 pp/dbl

prices are available from all major cities

GREAT ADD-ONS, INCLUDING AIR:

Kapawi - from all departure points \$1,680.00 pp/dbl
Machu Picchu from \$1,996.00 pp/dbl

Prices are subject to confirmation

Your tour includes:

- Round-trip international air transportation
- All domestic air transportation
- All accommodation
- First class Galapagos small ship cruise
- All meals as per the itinerary
- Admissions to all sites
- Expert Galapagos guides
- Transfers & baggage handling
- All taxes

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.



\$5,135

India's Golden Triangle

FULLY ESCORTED

20 days departing 3rd October 2005 & March 2006

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 Lalgarh 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



Your tour includes:

- All international & domestic flights
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- State transport taxes
- All taxes and visa charge
- All meals
- English-speaking guides and escort
- All entrance fees
- Elephant ride and Camel safari
- Baggage handling

PRICES INCLUDING AIR departing from:

Vancouver	\$5,385 pp/dbl	Toronto	\$5,135 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$5,385 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$5,135 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$5,385 pp/dbl	Montreal	\$5,135 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,385 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$5,485 pp/dbl
Prices are subject to confirmation		Single supplement \$1,178 Taxes extra	

4 WEEKS
\$5,180

Long Stays in Mexico

departures throughout May and June 2005 & Jan, Feb, Mar and Apr 2006 for 1, 2 or 3 weeks or 1 month

We invite you to come to Mexico's fascinating Yucatán and to immerse yourself in this region's culture. *You will hardly believe all that this trip includes!* You'll stay in an en-suite room in a home in a gracious, residential area of colonial Mérida, where your English-speaking hosts can help you with your Spanish if you so wish. All the homes have been carefully selected by our colleague in Merida and if you would like a home with a special feature - a swimming pool, for example - we will try to please you. You will enjoy three meals a day with your hosts or away from 'home' when you are on an excursion with us. And, of course, your flights from Canada and airport transfers in Mexico are included too.

Every day - but only if and when you wish - you'll take part in an incredible variety of cultural activities, workshops or excursions. Workshops include cookery lessons, painting and sculpture, music appreciation, Tai Chi and others. Short excursions include theatrical, musical and dance events; a bull fight; museum and gallery visits; sporting events; birdwatching; traditional Mexican evenings and more, while a week-end trip will take you to Cancun and the Mayan Riviera. Again all meals, accommodation and admissions are included. In luxurious coaches you'll visit Campeche and Izamal, the fabled Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, the Celestial Biosphere and much more.

To add to the experience of this trip you may also choose to take daily Spanish lessons in a pleasant Merida language school. This is the only 'extra' of the trip ... other than that you will rarely open your wallets except to purchase personal items, souvenirs and gifts.

Because Mexicans really know how to enjoy life, you will return to Canada with wonderful tales of all the fun you have had while enjoying your rich learning experience. You will have made new friends and have many wonderful memories. You can choose to go for a week or two, or for a month. On subsequent weeks you may remain with your original hosts or move to enjoy another home and make new friends. This programme has been designed exclusively for The Travel Society ... it is a unique and wonderful experience. Enjoy!

EXAMPLE PRICES INCLUDING AIR:

Toronto/ 1 week	\$2,634 pp/dbl	Vancouver 1 week	\$2,889 pp/dbl
Ottawa/ 2 weeks	\$3,483 pp/dbl	2 weeks	\$3,738 pp/dbl
Montreal 3 weeks	\$4,335 pp/dbl	3 weeks	\$4,590 pp/dbl
4 weeks	\$5,180 pp/dbl	4 weeks	\$5,435 pp/dbl

Prices are subject to confirmation

prices are available from all major cities

Your stay includes:

- Round trip international & domestic air fare
- Airport transfers
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- Homestay accommodation with English-speaking hosts
- Three meals a day
- English-speaking guides and escorts
- All workshops and activities
- All week-end trips with meals and hotels
- All entrance fees
- All departure taxes and fees

a NEW 19-day tour...

Space limited to 16 members
Fully Escorted

Spectacular

South Africa

**ONLY
4 SPACES LEFT!**

Departure: 15 September 2005 & 23 February 2006

Come with The Travel Society to a land of wonder ... on a South African trip unlike any other. Designed especially for our members, this trip takes in all the highlights: Kruger National Park for game watching, the famous Garden Route, the beautiful wine region of Stellenbosch and the sights of incomparable Cape Town, including Cape Point, Chapman's Peak Drive and Robben Island. But on our trip you will do far more. You will tour the Great Escarpment of Eastern Transvaal – a place so beautiful writers run out of adjectives – where you will visit God's Window, the Blyde River Canyon and historical towns like Pilgrims Rest. You'll see Johannesburg and be escorted to Soweto for lunch in a Township house and jazz in a famous nightspot. You'll enter the Kingdom of Swaziland to meet the people and enjoy more game watching. Zululand is also on the itinerary, with its historical sites and unique entertainment traditions. You'll be driven through the Valley of a Thousand Hills to East London and take the famous Outeniqua Choo-Ttoe train from Knysna to George. You'll visit the Addo Elephant National Park and traverse the Little Karoo Desert – flanked by great mountain ranges – to see the Cango Caves. You'll travel in a luxury air-conditioned coach, you'll stay in lovely properties ranging from good hotels to charming chalets, you'll enjoy a wide variety of entertainment and you'll enjoy South Africa's delicious cuisine and wines and you'll be escorted all the way by Satour-accredited guides. Here at The Travel Society we know South Africa well ... and we can't imagine a more comprehensive, in-depth and fascinating tour of South Africa.

PRICES INCLUDING AIR AND TAXES departing from:

Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa \$6,826 pp/dbl

Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax \$7,109 pp/dbl

Single supplement TBA (sharing can be arranged)

Prices are subject to confirmation

Your tour includes:

- Return international airfare on British Airways
- First-class accommodation throughout
- Luxury a/c Mercedes coach
- Experienced Satour-accredited tour guides
- Special Travel Society experiences
- All meals breakfast, light lunch and dinner
- All transfers with full luggage service
- All sightseeing fees (with no hidden extras)
- All taxes

Please call for the full itinerary

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