

The Travel Society

Magazine

Vol. 24, No. 10 December 2006



Winnipeg Highlights

Dubai

A Return to Greece

Cooking up a Storm in Morocco

Walking Spain's Camino de Santiago

Editor

Ann Wallace
ann@thetravelsociety.com

Contributors

Yvonne Whyte
Nancy Macdonald
Katherine McIntyre
John & Doreen Berg
Bob & Jennifer Hastie

Publisher

Nigel D Raincock
nigel@thetravelsociety.com

Administrator

Debbie Philip
debbie@thetravelsociety.com

Graphic Design & Production

Yong Park
yong@thetravelsociety.com

The Travel Society Magazine (ISSN#1717-242X) is an independent, consumer magazine published in Canada ten times a year. Although extreme care is taken to ensure the accuracy of material herein, **The Travel Society** does not assume any liability for errors or omissions, for changes in fares or schedules, or for readers' decisions based on the opinions of the editor or writers. Readers are advised to confirm all information prior to booking.

Rates for CANADA (GST included):

1 year - \$49.00

2 years - \$95.00

3 years - \$140.00

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

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

Back issues:

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

Copyright 2006 by The Travel Society Inc.

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

The Travel Society Inc.

218 - 1033 Bay Street,

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. M5S 3A5

Tel: 416 926 0111 Fax: 416 926 0222

e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com

web-site: www.thetravelsociety.com

Postmaster: Please send address corrections to the above address.

Printed in Canada. GST Reg # R135785962

Publications Mail Agreement:

40063904 & # 09925

Customer # 2289997

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

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) and the Canadian Magazine Fund of the Department of Canada Heritage toward our mailing and project costs.

December 2006

Vol. 24, No. 10

contents

Readers' Letters

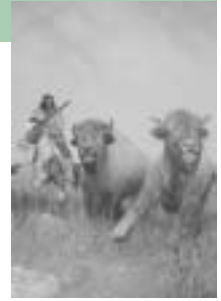
Mosetlha Bush Camp, South Africa	3
California Coast North of San Francisco	3
Winnipeg Airport Lounge	4
Rafting to an Eco-lodge in Costa Rica	4

Destinations

Winnipeg Highlights	6
Dubai ... Gold Souks and Aquamarine Waters	11
A Return to Greece	13
Cooking up a Storm in Morocco	16
Walking the Camino de Santiago	18

News

Getting "Bumped"	19
Index for 2006	20



A diorama in the Manitoba Museum illustrates a Metis hunting buffalo on the prairies

editor's letter ...

This final issue of the year takes us to some varied destinations; from our own culture-rich Winnipeg to the beaches and souks of Dubai. Or maybe you'll get out your atlas to see where those travels in Greece may take you, or maybe you'll resolve to walk off a few pounds in the spring on Spain's famous Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route or add a few pounds on an exotic cookery course in Morocco. Whatever interests you, I hope you enjoy this last issue of the year.

I'm sure many of you will agree ... the older one gets the faster the festive season seems to roll around. We feel we've barely put our festive music and decorations away when they all have to be brought out again. So, yes, it's time to wish you all happy end-of-year holidays. I wonder how many of you are staying at home and how many heading away? If it's the latter please remember the tips: if you're flying, get to the airport early and don't pre-wrap your presents. If you're driving you will, of course, check the weather reports but don't forget to prepare a 'survival kit' for your car in case you're caught in an unexpected storm.

So whether you spend the festive season looking back on past travels, sharing memories and photos, or looking ahead and planning new adventures, all of us here at The Travel Society wish you a happy and safe holiday. Please keep your letters, tips and stories coming to us in 2007 and we, in turn, will circulate them amongst you all as we look forward to bringing this magazine to you in 2007. See you in the New Year! Happy days!



Mosetlha Bush Camp, South Africa

If South Africa is in your plans you may like to consider including a stay at Mosetlha Bush Camp in your itinerary. Located in South Africa's North West Province (with Botswana as its northern border), Madikwe Game Reserve is a 3½ hour drive from Johannesburg and Pretoria and under an hour from Gaborone, Botswana. It also has a gravel airstrip for those who wish to fly in. Those who drive must leave their vehicle at the gate of the Reserve, where a guide will pick you up and transport you to the Bush Camp.

Madikwe, the fourth largest game reserve in South Africa, is some 70,000 hectares of rugged and untouched beauty. The Reserve offers the 'big five' (elephant, lion, leopard, black and white rhino and buffalo) plus the endangered wild dog and cheetah. It also has 340 species of birds to keep birders happy.

Mosetlha offers a real bush camp experience, so if you need a swimming pool or air conditioning, read no further. The camp offers comfortable accommodation in raised wooden cabins, which they refer to as "rustic." Oil lamps, safari showers and delicious bush fare prepared on the open fire offers a mix of home comforts and really being in the African bushveld.

I loved every minute of my four-day stay at Mosetlha. Being able to sit in an open 4x4 amongst a pride of lions was an experience of a lifetime. And while seeing elephants, rhinos and buffalo were highlights, getting a chance to see animals such as an aardwolf and a wild cat were just as thrilling. And there were so many beautiful birds, many of which could be seen right in camp. Our guide was excellent, as was the rest of the staff, in looking after our comfort. The camp accommodates just 16 people in twin cabins, ensuring the personal touch. The rates include all meals and refreshments (snacks, tea, coffee

and fruit) and guided walks and drives, as well as Emergency Evacuation Insurance. They do not include transportation to the Reserve, the park entrance fee, alcoholic drinks and gratuities. If you go to their excellent web site, 'what you see is what you get' as far as facilities and services. What it can't tell you is how you feel after you look into the eyes of a lion. You will need to experience that for yourself.

For further details and reservations contact the Johannesburg office at phone/fax: [011 27] 11 444 9345, e-mail: info@thebushcamp.com or visit www.thebushcamp.com

*Yvonne Whyte
Terrace, BC*

In last month's edition we brought you Nancy Macdonald's story of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, located about 100 miles south of San Francisco. However, Nancy also travelled on to explore north of San Francisco. Here's the 'scoop' ...

Exploring the California Coast North of San Francisco

Off-season, 4 – 7 February 2006 to be exact, was sunny and spectacular on coastal highway #1 north of San Francisco, California. The green of windswept trees, the blues and aquamarines of the Pacific Ocean, the white of spray and the abundant cala lilies delighted my winter-weary soul. Numerous parks and lookouts allow you to take your eyes off the winding road in safety. Pacific Coast Road #1 parallels highway #101 and the wine routes of Sonoma and the Napa Valley. You can head north on #1 from San Francisco or travel up one of the other routes and cross west on highway #20 through redwood forests to join highway #1 just south of Fort Bragg as I did.

Fort Bragg is a value-priced alternative to staying in Mendocino just 10 minutes south. At the north end of Fort Bragg, I found the Beachcomber Motel

located on an ocean path with the sights and sounds of the crashing Pacific waves. My room was \$50 (all prices US) with continental breakfast included and they offered two nights for the price of one until the end of March. Other deals may be possible at other times. Cliff House is a spectacular restaurant on several levels overlooking the ocean and the river at 1011 South Main Street, the south end of Fort Bragg.

Famed as the home village of Cabot Cove in 'Murder She Wrote', Mendocino has countless charms. Among the many art galleries don't miss 'Art That Makes You Laugh' at 45000 Main Street. Shops and restaurants line this street. There are numerous B&B's in town and you will notice many homes still retaining original water towers. The colours of these homes and flowers are almost over-shadowed by the surrounding ocean views, the especially spectacular sunsets and the tides meeting the Big River with crashing waves.

A 2006 Visitor Guide is available at www.mendocinocoast.com or by email: chamber@mcn.org. The Mendocino Coast State Parks are numerous and follow many of the river canyons inland. Hiking and camping are available. Write to them for information c/o Russian Gulch State Park, PO Box #440, Mendocino, CA 95460. Heading south from Mendocino, just below Manchester, turn off to Point Arena. Surfers test their nerves on either side of the wharf there and after lunch on the second floor deck I was almost tempted to join them! But I thought it better to check in to the Wharf Master's Inn on a hill above the cove where, after enjoying the hikes on their property, I relaxed in front of the fire or in the hot tub in my room. Prices here ranged from \$79 to \$200.

My most luxurious off-season find, however, was Seacliff on the Bluff in Gualala, farther south. Truly it is a romantic retreat with a jacuzzi tub, bottle of champagne, gas fireplace and king-size bed. From com-

comfortable seating in the window or from the private deck using provided binoculars, you can view seals in the river below. Pacific waves crash sending spray skyward and the incoming tides make patterns on the sandbar. The rate for this unexpected luxury? \$80, with a second night available at half-price. There are stores and an art gallery in Gualala, one of the few towns on this stretch of coast line.

For a truly private get-away on "the Wild Sonoma Coast", consider Timber Cove Inn, 15 miles north of Jenner or two hours north of San Francisco. Some rooms offer ocean views from your tub, fireplaces, balconies and skylights. After hiking the trails, enjoy a drink beside the towering stone fireplace in the lobby or merely drink in the serenity of the Japanese garden. The range of price for these unique rooms is \$78 to \$500 US. I was relieved to find that holidaying in California was actually affordable in what, for them, is off-season but for us is welcome respite from our snow, cold and grey time of year.

Contact details ...

Beachcomber Motel in Fort Bragg: 707 964 2402 or www.thebeachcombermotel.com.

Cliff House Restaurant of Fort

Bragg: 707 961 0255 or www.fortbragg.org.

Camping reservation for **Mendocino Coast State Parks**: 707 937 5804.

Wharf Master's Inn: 707 882 3171 or www.wharfmasters.com.

Seacliff on the Bluff: 707 884 1213 or www.seacliffmotel.com.

Timber Cove Inn: 707 847 3231 or www.timbercoveinn.com.

*Nancy Macdonald,
Toronto, ON*

Winnipeg Airport Lounge

With regard to the airport lounge issue discussed in TTS recently, Winnipeg was not mentioned, so I'd like to add a few words. Recently I found myself with a long lay-over at the Winnipeg International Airport. I had heard about the Palliser Lounge. It's similar to the Maple Leaf lounges but less restrictive. Any plane ticket and \$15 will let you stay in the lounge all day. Alcoholic drinks and sandwiches are sold at airport prices, but there are many free "munchies" such as doughnuts, bagels, cookies, fruit and drinks. The easy chairs are comfortable, there are desks if you wish to work, computer rooms and a TV. It's a quiet and

comfortable place and well worth the \$15 if you have to spend a few hours in Winnipeg Airport.

*Sonia Simes,
The Pas, Manitoba*

Rafting to an Eco-lodge in Costa Rica

"Forward, back, get down." shouts Antonio, our river guide. The bright blue rubber raft swirls, twists and turns as we navigate the rapids in Costa Rica's Pacuare River. We wind through rock canyon walls deep in the rainforest, over rapids sideways, backwards, past a cascading waterfall. The river widens, the turbulence ceases and we catch our first glimpse of the Pacuare Lodge's thatched roof bungalows. Our gear, safely stowed in bright red rubber bags, is unloaded as the manager, Willman Salanos greets us. "There is no electricity," he warns. "Be sure to carry your flashlight to happy hour. It gets dark at six o'clock."

This environmentally sensitive lodge with its nine separate bungalows, set in an untouched tropical wilderness, is the only lodge in the country where everything, including most of the

The Travel Society website

Visit *The Travel Society* website www.thetravelsociety.com

Our website is fully operational. We always want to improve it and welcome your input.

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

You can renew your subscription on-line too!

guests, arrive by raft. Designed with the adventurous in mind, there are plenty of amenities - except electricity. I reach my cabin, set in a garden-like setting of rare tropical plants and giant ceiba trees via a stone path that wends its way through a swath of lush green grass.

If the screened bungalow with its polished teak floors, queen sized bed, down filled pillows, plus a candle and a wind-up flashlight on the bedside table, spells a unique form of luxury, the bathroom is straight out of *Homes and Gardens*. Open, with a privacy screen of dark green foliage, its solar heated hot water flows into a burnished copper sink. A lush arrangement of bright red tropical flowers rests beside a wood stand holding huge white towels.

The owners of this award-winning lodge, a Swiss and a Costa Rican, are serious about preserving the fragile ecology. Instead of cutting down their endangered rainforest to build the bungalows, they brought in wood by raft from a sustainable tree plantation. Local Cacebar Indians thatched the palm leafed conical roofs in their traditional way. With no electricity, the romantic atmosphere of candles, flashlights and lanterns melds right in there with conservation. At happy hour guests gather at the rustic bamboo bar upstairs in the main lodge to nibble on yucca chips and trade stories about the triumphs and pitfalls of travelling. Then it's time for a candle-lit gourmet dinner served communal style on a long table in the lodge's downstairs dining area. Dinner might include fish baked in plantain leaves with a touch of herbs, white wine and fresh cream, coupled with a local specialty of cassava, fried bread fruit, or wild rice and organic garden vegetables. For a grand finale an organic chocolate tort is served with vanilla ice-cream laced with rum and topped with crystallized ginger. The river guides, turned waiters, wearing large white aprons keep the wine flowing.

Unless guests are afraid of heights they make the offered canopy tour over the tops of the rain forest ... a

once-in-a-lifetime experience. I (a senior, I'd like to add!) scramble up a narrow, steep winding path on the side of the canyon to Station One. Jorge, the on-site expert, gives me the safety talk and hands out a helmet, special vest and heavy gloves. Feeling edgy, I climb to the first platform high in the branches of a giant ceiba tree. The view is astonishing, but the 500 metres of heavy steel wire connecting the stations was not reassuring. Jorge shouts *tres, dos*, and – at the sound of *uno* – I flew off the platform and found myself zipping over the canopy of the rain forest to Station Two. By the third station I relaxed. By the end of my two hours above the tree tops I was hooked on canopy tours.

Besides the canopy tour you can hike through the lush rainforest, past crystal streams to the neighbouring Cacebar Indian village. There Zutkia, the local shaman, describes the first inhabitants of Costa Rica. Or you can meander through the gardens to swim in a cool pool underneath a cascading waterfall. On another day I rose at dawn for the daybreak tour to learn about orchids, bromeliads, the orange flowered amapolis and to add toucans and the Montezuma Oropendula to my bird list.

All too soon it was time to hop in the raft for the rest of our eighteen miles on the river. Bags stowed, we strap on our red life jackets and yellow helmets and within minutes the raft is off ... spinning, dipping, and diving until it slips into a safe pool beside the canyon wall. The current slows and the river meanders into civilization. Cars whiz over a bridge. Soaked and laughing, we disembark. Our trip ends and the Pacuare River, rated as one of the five best rafting rivers in the world, continues its journey to the Atlantic Ocean.

Pacuare Lodge is managed by Costa Rica Nature Adventures (contact William Cook) 1 800 514 0411 or 1 888 PACUARE, www.junglelodgcostarica.com. Guests choosing to arrive by raft are picked up at their San José hotel and brought down to the banks of the Pacuare River to board the boat. It is

also possible to reach Pacuare Lodge by land, first on the hotel's 4-wheel-drive vehicle, then crossing the river on a gondola, and then hiking the last thousand feet (300 m) on a trail that parallels the river. Visit their website for full details and package prices. And the Costa Rica National Tourist Board can be visited at www.visitcostarica.com

*Katherine McIntyre
Toronto, ON*

Members are rewarded for sharing!

The TravelSociety rewards members 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!

ann@thetravelsociety.com

or

**218 - 1033 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5S 3A5**

Note: If it is possible to include wheelchair-accessible information in your letters and stories I know that would be appreciated by many.

Thanks! - Ed.



The Gabrielle Roy House Museum

Winnipeg was much in the news last month, as Grey Cup fever gripped the city. But as The Travel Society Magazine discovered on an earlier fall visit to the city, Winnipeggers love arts and culture too. Come with us to discover just some of what the capital of Manitoba has to offer.

Winnipeg Highlights

story and photos by Ann Wallace

“I was dragged here kicking and screaming, but now I love Winnipeg and can’t imagine living anywhere else.” It’s Innkeeper Christine talking and I’m sitting in the plant and flower-bedecked conservatory of her lovely home and B&B on a drive called West Gate, alongside the Assiniboine River, close to downtown Winnipeg.

This was not the first time I’d heard this sentiment. A month or so earlier, at a tourism conference, I’d bumped into an old friend and colleague of mine – Cathy Senecal. Cathy and I had travelled together in the past and many years ago she wrote a few articles for this magazine. She has also penned a fascinating book about Manitoba parks and their

wildlife (see note below). Today Cathy is a manager at Travel Manitoba and an enthusiastic spokesperson for her adopted province and city. “I can’t believe you have never set foot in Manitoba! You really must pay a visit, at least to Winnipeg. I love living there and would love to show you around.” And she was right ... all that remained on my Canadian Province/Territory ‘to do’ list were the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and – yes – Manitoba. I needed no more persuading.

Thus it was that I found myself on an inexpensive WestJet flight out of Toronto to Winnipeg this past fall, eager to see Cathy again who was waiting to meet me on arrival. She and her colleague Janice from Destination Winnipeg Inc., had made an itinerary for me to see some of the city’s

highlights with time to visit some B&B's for my readers as I had requested. Not only did we have a whale of a time, I was also so impressed with all I saw and enjoyed in Winnipeg! If you haven't visited, or if you did long ago, come with me as I explore some of its cultural highlights.

First of all you'll need somewhere to stay. If your pockets are deep and a view of that famous urban junction of Portage and Main appeals, you'll find a **Fairmont Hotel** right there! Comfortable rooms with all the luxuries and amenities of this renowned hotel group are guaranteed and you'll be within walking distance of many of the city's attractions. The Forks is another well-known corner of Winnipeg and here stands the city's only "boutique hotel" called, unsurprisingly, **Inn at the Forks**. It's rather ugly on the outside, but chic and modern within with a trendy bar and restaurant. But if you'd rather be in a beautiful B&B in the gracious residential area known as West Gate, on the banks of the Assiniboine River, I have two outstanding recommendations. The **Beechmount B&B**, owned by charming hosts Christine and Giovanni (she of the above quote!) offers three memorable bedroom suites (one large enough for a family or small group) in a restored 18-room Victoria home that is protected by an historic designation. Summer visitors here can relax in the lush garden and swimming pool or, at other times of the year, enjoy the ever-changing view of garden and wildlife from the plant-filled conservatory. **River Gate Inn B&B**, owned by young Michelle & Keith Sanheim, stands just a short walk further on West Gate. This is another mansion-style home in spacious gardens with gracious public rooms and, like the Beechmount, every comfort. (All details below.)

I landed in late-September sunshine. "A great morning for a drive through **Assiniboine Park** while we catch up on our news ... it's close to the airport," declared Cathy as we wheeled out of the car park. She was right. This lovely park is pretty and popular in all seasons and as it is adjoined by other green spaces (and includes a zoo) it is a fine spot for birdwatching, walking and other outdoor activities. It's also home to the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden, the largest one-person outdoor sculpture garden in Canada. A lovely spot for some fresh-air art appreciation. The **Tavern in the Park** here looked beautiful and, I learned, is renowned for its cuisine and especially for its Sunday brunch. It is also famous for its upper floor art gallery that we visited. Here, among permanent collections of local artists, is the rare and only oil painting by original illustrator E.H. Shepard of Winnipeg's namesake 'Winnie the Pooh'.

As the weather was gentle **The Forks** was our next destination. This junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers is

Winnipeg's – and one of North America's – most historic spots. It has been a hub of activity for, perhaps, six thousand years, from the days when Aboriginal people came here to hunt, meet and trade. Explorers, European traders and immigrants followed. Today The Forks is a wide expanse of open parkland with walking paths, colourful historic plaques and year-round activities ranging from summer concerts to winter skating. As I looked down on the river here I was treated to the sight of a great blue heron daintily making his way through the shallows. And should a little rain (or snow!) fall during your visit here, or if you feel in need of a shopping fix (an ethnic outfit perhaps, or a unique gift or two by local artists, or some sushi or fudge) this would be a good time to head to The Forks Market. This is also home to **Sydney's Restaurant**, an elegant spot with a patio and fine view over the river where I enjoyed my first Winnipeg lunch and was introduced to some of the fine cuisine to be found in this city.

After lunch I welcomed the thought of some more walking, so set off to discover Winnipeg's **Exchange District**. This 20-block area, hidden behind the modern towers of Portage and Main, holds a collection of early 20th century urban buildings that many architects consider the finest such collection in North America. Imposing and austere, this National Historic Site is now undergoing a revival, with old warehouses being converted into art galleries, theatres, restaurants, loft housing and even a college without compromising the original façades.

The **Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature** was on my itinerary for the following morning. "We'll meet for a late lunch," said my friends. I secretly wondered if there was enough to interest me in the Museum for a whole morning and later couldn't believe I had ever enter-



(above) *The Beechmount B&B*

(right) *The River Gate Inn B&B*



tained such a thought! One could spend weeks or months in this fabulous museum and if I told you all I saw on just one morning it would take up this whole magazine! The statistics prove it: the museum holds more than 2.5 million artifacts that together reflect the human and natural history of Manitoba and the world. Nine permanent galleries represent each region of Manitoba, including the Grasslands, the Boreal Forest, the Parklands and the Arctic/Sub-Arctic and the people who have inhabited them through the ages. Then there's the Hudson's Bay Company Gallery and the Nonsuch Gallery which contains one of the world's finest replica ships. The replica *Nonsuch* was built in England to celebrate the tricentenary of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1970. She made her own historic 8,700 mile voyage through ocean and fresh water before final being berthed at the Museum. Her original namesake sailed into Hudson Bay in 1668 to explore the possibilities of opening a fur trade in the area; a venture which we now know was successful for Britain and the Hudson's Bay Company.

M u s e u m
visitors can board the vessel and try to imagine that 17th century voyage. I also loved the mini dioramas,



Two of the works in the Leo Mol Sculpture Garden. The work on the left is entitled "Tom Lamb" and was created to honour the airmen of the north.

especially the one depicting the Algonkian Indian village and another a winter scene of the engineers and surveyors who researched the laying of the trans-Canada railroad. And I took photos of some of the life-sized dioramas that startled my family and friends (see our cover!). On a smaller scale, some of the dyed porcupine quillwork created by the Plains Cree is fascinating. My time was running out and I had to hurry through the Urban Gallery, a recreation of Winnipeg on an evening in 1920. Here are recreated commercial and residential establishments of that time, a railway station, theatre, cinema, factories, a restaurant and the Mission, all bordering wooden sidewalks with sound effects to help visitors imagine this 'boom town' era. How did they gather all those artifacts, many of which reminded me of grandma's house? This interpretive museum is considered to be one of North America's finest, it has garnered many awards and it, alone, is worth a visit to Winnipeg.

But no stay in Winnipeg would be complete without a visit to the **Winnipeg Art Gallery**, or the WAG, as it is predictably known. Some art galleries strive to be works of art in themselves, and the WAG succeeds in this. Designed by Gustavo de Rosa of Winnipeg and completed in 1971, this Tyndall limestone building rises from its foundations like the prow of a ship in the heart of the city. The gallery as institution is the oldest public art gallery in western Canada, having been founded in 1912. It started as a simple gallery in two rooms of the old Federal Building on Main Street and survived several moves before, finally, being granted a fitting home of its own. It boasts the world's largest collection of contemporary Inuit art and since I had recently been in Nunavut this wonderful exhibition was of special interest to me. And then, climbing the stairs to the upper galleries, my eye caught a painting that was inexplicably familiar. It was *Plaza Café*, an oil on canvas painted by Canadian Philip Surrey and dated 1959. This was my first visit to Winnipeg and its art gallery. Why was I so familiar with this painting? And then it came flooding back to me. Gabrielle Roy! One of Winnipeg's most famous daughters! Philip Surrey's painting adorns the cover of my copy of *The Tin Flute*. How thrilled I was to be seeing this original painting now.

Ah yes, **Gabrielle Roy**. A 'must' for lovers of Canadian literature is a visit to her birthplace and home in the French Quarter of Winnipeg. Pick a fine afternoon (the house museum is closed in the morning) and walk across the river on the pedestrian Esplanade Riel Bridge. You can follow the self-guided walking tour detailed in the *Explorer's Guide*

or ask directions to 375 Rue Deschambault, a quiet little street that featured in several of Roy's works, most prominent of which is *Street of Riches* (actually *Rue Deschambault* in the original French version). Wandering through this charming home looking at the photographs and reading all the memorabilia provides an intriguing glimpse not only into Roy's life but also into the community of Franco-Manitobans who inhabited – and still do – this corner of Canada. There's a tiny gift shop here, located in the old 'back kitchen', where English-version copies of Roy's works are on sale.

I spent longer than I'd planned in the Gabrielle Roy house, so didn't have time to visit the **Saint-Boniface Museum**, located in Winnipeg's oldest building – the Grey Nuns' Convent – now a National Historic Site of Canada. However, as I walked back to town I did pass its imposing façade, and saw the soaring ruins of the Cathédrale Saint-Boniface and Louis Riel's grave. This site will be high on my list for my next visit, as I hear that the museum holds an impressive collection of artifacts that reveal the lives and culture of the early Francophone and Métis population of Manitoba.

I had a date for the evening and was told the 'culture vultures' of Winnipeg, especially the ladies, were all aflutter. The **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's** new season was beginning under the direction of their new, young, 'easy-on-the-eye' conductor Alexander Mickelthwate. And my friends had tickets for us all ... an informal concert in one of the Musically Speaking series where the conductor compares and contrasts the pieces to be played, fires questions at the audience and is in the foyer at the end to engage in conversations. A great evening with Beethoven, Schoenberg and lots of music-loving Winnipeggers.

With just one morning left, I headed out for walk past the imposing Manitoba Legislative Building and thence to the **Dalnavert Museum**. This opulent Queen Anne Revival house was the home of Sir Hugh John Macdonald, former Premier of Manitoba. Today it has been restored and filled with treasures and it presents visitors with an interesting glimpse of how the 'upper crust' lived in Winnipeg at the turn of the century. Gracious guides are available to take visitors around the house and there's an exhibition on architect Charles Wheeler and a very nice gift shop. You'll only need about an hour or so here, but don't miss it.

Before I left Winnipeg I told my old friend Cathy and my new friend Janice how much I had enjoyed my first visit to Winnipeg and expressed the hope that I would return soon. "And don't forget to make time to explore more of Manitoba," they told me, "our wild places and wildlife are wonderful too!" As my flight took off from Winnipeg, I reflected on all I had enjoyed in the previous four days. There's no doubt that Winnipeg has much history and culture to offer and I know I barely scratched the surface. But during my four day visit I had enjoyed some fascinating museums both large and small, lots of delicious meals, some lovely walks and some stirring music. A city trip can't get any better than that!

Some details ...

* The code for all local **telephone numbers** given in this article is 204.

* **Destination Winnipeg** publish an excellent *Visitor's Guide*, available by calling 1 800 665 0204 or visit www.destinationwinnipeg.ca. Also available is an *Events Guide* that lists all sporting, festival and cultural events for the coming three months. They also have a **Downtown Information Centre** (tel: 943 1970) located at 259 Portage Avenue, open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. And the website for tourism in the whole province is www.travelmanitoba.com.
* Another worthwhile guide for your Winnipeg explorations is the *Winnipeg Explorer's*



The Winnipeg Art Gallery upper floor and its roof garden

Guide, published by the WHERE Magazine people. It is up-dated every year and contains all you need to make the most of Winnipeg, from self-guided walking tours in every district to restaurant and shop listings, all attractions and local history and even locally-loved recipes. It contains hundreds of photographs and is well worth the \$19.95 cost.
* Guided tours of the **Exchange District** are available during the summer months from Old Market Square, departing 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., \$6 or less. www.exchangedistrict.org
At other times your guidebook will reveal the highlights of this imposing district.

* The **Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature**, 190 Rupert Avenue, www.manitobamuseum.ca Museum galleries admission \$8, Planetarium shows \$6.50, Science Gallery \$6.50 or you can pay \$18 for a 'Full Experience' pass. Admissions slightly less for youths and seniors 60+. Tel: 956 2830, www.manitobamuseum.mb.ca

* The **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra**, box office tel: 949 3999, www.wso.mb.ca Of course Winnipeg is also home to the renowned **Royal Winnipeg Ballet**. Unfortunately there were no performances during my stay, but if you would like to check their schedule call 956 2792 or log on to www.rwb.org.

* **Gabrielle Roy Museum House**, open 1 – 5 p.m. or 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during ‘the tourist season, admission \$4 or less, tel: 231 3853, www.maisongabrielleroy.mb.ca

* The **Dalnavert Museum**, call 943 2835 for hours, admission \$5 or less, tel: 943 2835, www.mhs.mb.ca

* A free shuttle service called **Downtown Spirit** circles the city from The Forks, giving easy access to major attractions such as the Dalnavert, the Legislative Building, the Art Gallery, the Exchange District and more. Brochures in hotels and where tourism literature is displayed.

Accommodation

* The **Fairmont Hotel**, tel: 1800 441 1414, www.fairmont.com, rates from about \$159.

* The **Inn at the Forks**, tel: 1 877 377 4100, www.innforks.com, rates from about \$150.

* If the historic hotels of Canada interest you, you’ll like to treat yourself to a drink in the imposing former railway hotel – the **Fort Garry** on Broadway – even if you don’t stay there. Tel 1 800 665 8088, www.fortgarryhotel.com

* **Beechmount B&B**, 134 West Gate, Winnipeg, tel: 775 1144 or 1 866 797 0905, www.beechmount.ca Prices from \$70.

* **River Gate Inn B&B**, 186 West Gate, Winnipeg, tel: 474 2761 or 1 866 397 3345, www.rivergateinn.com Prices from \$89. Both these B&B’s are about a \$7 taxi ride from downtown, or your hosts will help you with local transportation details. There are also shops and restaurants within walking distance.

* Additional Winnipeg B&Bs can be found at www.bbcanda.com/associations/winnipeg

Restaurants

* I didn’t eat there, but by its setting alone I’m sure a meal at the **Tavern in the Park** would be memorable. Reservations recommended at 896 7275.

But I did eat at:

* **Sydney’s**, Forks Market, tel: 942 6075, [\[neysattheforks.com\]\(http://neysattheforks.com\). A lovely spot for lunch, or look forward to one of their renowned 5-course *prix fixe* dinners at \\$48.](http://www.syd-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

* **Mirlycourtois**, 188 Princess Street, tel: 942 7332. Up a flight of stairs, guests arrive at a French restaurant *par excellence*; delicious food served in a lovely room of exposed brick, wooden beams and navy blue paint setting off the French wall decorations.

* **The Fyxx** in Market Square in the Exchange District is a trendy place for lunch with hearty salads and sandwiches bearing clever play-on-word names such as Tandori’s Box and Basil’s Fawly Tower.

* The **Winnipeg Art Gallery** has a trendy restaurant overlooking its rooftop sculpture garden. Another really nice spot for lunch.

* Catherine Senecal’s book ***Pelicans to Polar Bears: Watching Wildlife in Manitoba*** is published by Heartland Publications at \$19.95. It includes fine photographs and clear maps of Manitoba’s parks together with suggested itineraries for each site to help with itinerary planning throughout Manitoba.

* Well ... you never know ... I may have tempted you to visit Winnipeg in the winter. If so, here’s some additional information to help you enjoy the season. The Dalnavert Museum will be decorated with a Victorian Christmas theme and holiday treats and handmade ornaments will be available in their gift store. The Manitoba Museum will be featuring ‘Christmas at the Turn of the Century’ in its Urban Gallery and Assiniboine Park Conservatory will also be decorated in Victorian style. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet will present *Peter Pan* from 22 –

31 December. In January and February the *Beatles Mystery Tour* will be staged at Celebrations Dinner Theatre, Western Canada’s largest French Winter Carnival will be staged from 9 – 18 February throughout the French Quarter and for a Valentine treat you could take your love to the Barenaked Ladies concert at the MTS centre and stay overnight in one of the above romantic B&B’s. If it’s the museums etc., that lure you to Winnipeg you’ll find winter a great time to visit, but for outdoor enthusiasts, the award-winning Fort Whyte Nature Centre will offer snowshoeing, skating and a super toboggan slide; the Forks has a covered skating rink and you’ll find the shops and restaurants in the Forks Market open all winter. 🇩🇪



Statue honouring missionary Jean-Baptiste La Verendrye and a voyageur in the grounds of Saint-Boniface Cathedral

DUBAI .. GOLD SOUKS AND AQUAMARINE WATERS

story and photos by John and Doreen Berg

Dubai is becoming an increasingly popular hub for air travellers. But as John and Doreen Berg tell us here, it's also worth a stopover.

On our Vancouver to Delhi journey we decided to stop over in Dubai, where we discovered a truly extraordinary destination. The city demonstrates a dramatic contrast between the old and the new and with the desert as a backdrop and the warm azure Persian Gulf on its doorstep, it's a perfect tourist destination. All one needs to enjoy the warm waters, the sunny skies and the exotic city is time and money! When researching flights to India, Emirates Airlines checked in as the least expensive and provided a stop-over in its hub city, Dubai. After checking our atlas and discovering that Dubai is part of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) we decided to spend eight days exploring not only Dubai but also nearby Muscat. But, as it turned out, we spent our time discovering and enjoying only Dubai!

For us, Dubai was "over-the-top" with such hotels as the world-famous Burj al Arab, designed to resemble a billowing sail out in the bay. The hotel soars to a height of 321 meters. At night it offers an unforgettable choreographed lighting show. While we didn't check it out (it's just a wee bit out of our budget league), we did hear that the Sunday brunch selection on the upper restaurant terrace is extraordinary. But so is the price tag: \$250 per person! (All prices US.) (*The hotel is, I believe, rated "7-star" and only regis-*



The Jumeira Mosque

tered guests are allowed in! - Ed.)

Construction cranes and drag lines dot the rapidly-expanding city's skyline as foreign construction crews spew out taller and bigger buildings and structures of varying architectural designs at a breath-taking pace. In addition, they are reclaiming land for man-made islands like Palm Jumeirah and Pal Jebel Ali on Dubai's shoreline. The islands are being touted as the next eighth wonder of the world and it is said they are visible from the moon! Apparently they are being snapped up by those with *very* deep pockets. For those with more modest budgets, Dubai offers fabulous gold and spice souks, local shopping streets, and super-sized ultra-modern malls offering every product imaginable at tax-free prices. They give new meaning to the phrase "shop 'til you drop"!

And the prices are usually a bargain. Our hotel, like most, included a tour desk that offered a variety of trips. We enjoyed a City Tour (\$35 pp) that introduced us to some of Dubai's beautiful landmarks such as the Jumeira Mosque and the old Al-Fahidi fort, now converted to a museum. An off-road jeep desert safari was our other choice (\$70 pp). It took us to the countryside where we slid or bounced over and around towering dunes. After the wild 4x4 ride, a buffet of grilled meats, fresh salads and Arabian sweets was presented at a desert station. Usually a belly dancer entertains here, but since we were there during

Ramadan the dance was not performed.

Here's an idea of a typical day on vacation in Dubai. After our hotel buffet breakfast, we devoted our mornings to enjoying Dubai's nearby clean sandy beaches to laze away the hours in the clear warm waters and soak up the sun's rays. Once it became too hot, around noon, we retired to our hotel for lunch and often an afternoon siesta, to prepare for the evening's adventure.

The cooler evenings were a time to explore Khor Dubai (Dubai Creek) that splits the city into two sections: Deira, to the northeast, and Bur Dubai, where our hotel was located, to the southeast. A highlight was always the creek crossing in an *abras*, an inexpensive water taxi, observing the cityscape. Once on the Deira side it was intriguing to view the *dhow*s bound for ports throughout East Africa and the Gulf and wander the docks stacked with all sorts of interesting cargo. Next, a short walk to the shops and the souks to window shop the gold baubles. And, you guessed it, we purchased a gold ring and some Indian clothing! The nearby small side street eateries offered a rest to tired feet and an opportunity to sample Arabic *felafel* and *shwarma* with a cool drink (no alcohol here) at great prices.

Later in the evening we enjoyed the pricier upscale restaurant scene for a leisurely evening meal. An enjoyable dinner and a highlight of our stay was a romantic dinner cruise on one of the illuminated Arabian *dhow*s. Prior to departure, around 7 p.m., we walked along the creekside near the Al Boom Tourism Village enquiring at each *dhow* as to the price and menu being offered until we located a floating restaurant that met our budget and tastes. We paid our money and enjoyed a sumptuous buffet dinner, with alcoholic drinks extra, while sailing past the illuminated city line. Cruises may be booked through hotels or an agent, but our method proved to be cheaper and allowed us to select our own dinner cruise boat (\$30 US pp).

Our accommodation, the Seashell Hotel Inn, was an excellent choice. We booked a regular room at the Sea Shell in the Bur Dubai area from the internet site www.southtravels.com for \$88 dbl. including a buffet breakfast of English, Arabian and Indian dishes. When we decided to extend our stay we negotiated a lower rate. The hotel is centrally located in the computer district within walking distance of the creek, the gold souk and nearby Al Mina shopping area. The room was comfortable and of a good size, clean and well maintained. Service was fine and staff helpful and friendly. The sports bar "Johnnie's" is a small pub where even female guests alone can enjoy an evening nightcap. However, the

pub might be reason to ask for a room on the upper floors. Our room was #710 but we met people who commented that the third floor was noisy. There is a complimentary hotel shuttle service to Jumairah Beach Park and Wild Wadi Waterpark is nearby for kids and the young at heart. The hotel is about 15 minutes from the airport and provides free transportation upon request. Overall, a nice three star, affordable, small quiet hotel (especially during Ramadan) with convenient access to all places of interest.

We found all the people helpful and friendly and felt safe walking the streets even late in the evening. Dubai would be a destination suitable for families with children as there are lots of activities like the waterpark, the beaches and the museum to keep them amused. The best time to visit is late October to March, thus avoiding the extreme heat. We were there in October during Ramadan and thus the city was not crowded and during the day not all shops were open. However, we liked this just fine. The afternoon heat, 38°+ C, caused our endurance to wilt, but the air conditioned malls and afternoon naps were a welcome alternative. Or, if you wish, you can do a little snow skiing as the indoor artificial ski hill complex is now open! Dubai was an unexpected destination for us en route to India. Our eight-day visit was sufficient to experience the city's charm, excitement and diversity. As a stopover city we would again schedule a few days to revisit Dubai if our travels take us in that direction.



The Burj al Arab Hotel

Some details:

Emirates Airlines, www.emirates.com. Top notch, with comfortable cabins and excellent service.

Seashell Inn Hotel, P.O. Box 20715, Dubai, UAE, www.godubai.com/lodging/seashell_index.htm, e-mail: shellinn@emirates.net.ae.

Jagjivan Ranchhod Goldsmith, Old Gold Souk. A good selection, no pressure to buy and we were able to bargain.

Sheraton Hotel Creekside Japanese Restaurant, Reservations 207 1750. Only one of the many restaurants we enjoyed. I believe there were three restaurants in this hotel alone so with hundreds of restaurants it's no problem to find a food style to enjoy.

Dhow Dinner Cruise: Al Boom Tourism Village near Al-Garhoud Bridge. Take a taxi to the park area for dinner cruises which leave around 8:00 p.m. Prices vary (\$25 -\$60 pp) with or without alcohol included.

Guidebook: *Arabian Peninsula*, published by Lonely Planet. As a reference and for possible itineraries and other Arabian Peninsula destinations. 📖



A Return to Greece

story and photos by Bob & Jennifer Hastie

The harbour at Nafplio

The festive season is, for many, a time to start thinking about the coming year and it's certainly not too early to be thinking about Europe, especially for shoulder-season travels. In this account Bob and Jennifer Hastie tell about their Greek travels during the fall, but spring is also a wonderful time to visit Greece, before the crowds arrive and the wild spring flowers fade. Your choice, of course! And there will be more European stories for you in the coming months.

Since our initial trip to Greece in 1996, we had always longed to return. Our favourite area at that time was the **Peloponnese**. This huge peninsula, extending west from **Athens**, can be reached easily by bus or car in about two hours yet it is often overlooked by visitors who tend to head to the better-known Greek island destinations. But instead of renting a car from Athens, where the traffic is horrendous, we chose to “island hop” across from **Athens** to **Nafplio**, where we would pick up our car. En route we planned to spend a day or two on the Saronic islands of **Aegina**, **Hydra** and **Poros**. Island hopping over to the Peloponnese is quite easily done if you're somewhat adventurous.

Ferries, and the more expensive but quicker catamarans, leave from **Piraeus**, easily accessed from downtown Athens via the new, efficient and user-friendly metro line, finished for the Olympics in 2004. The trick is to find the right ferry to get down to the island of your choice. The task would be simple except for the fact that several ferry companies, in order to get your business, will not disclose other ferry schedules. This predicament led us to spend money on tickets that we did not need. It is better simply to sail to each island separately and then ask questions about further ferries once you get there. Luckily, this was the only time that we found the Greeks unhelpful in our travels. Otherwise we never had the feeling that we were being ripped off at any time during our stay. The ferry fare from **Piraeus** to **Aegina** was €9.50 (€ = approx. C\$1.50), from **Aegina** to **Hydra** €6.90, and from **Hydra** to **Hermioni** on the Peloponnese peninsula, €7.10. We finished our trip to **Nafplio** by

taking a public bus from **Hermioni**.

All three islands are interesting to see, but **Hydra** is well known for banning all cars and motorcycles. Apart from the occasional garbage truck, donkeys are enlisted to carry everything, including building supplies as well as tourists, up into the town built on the side of a hill. Although **Poros** doesn't have such a ban on transportation, it is also almost car free because it is also built on the side of a hill. Many of the 'streets' in both towns are actually lengthy staircases. What a treat it is to wander through these towns, their buildings and pathways all white washed, pots of flowers and bushes of bougainvillea everywhere!

The tourist season rapidly winds down in the fall. We found that hotel reservations were not necessary and the prices had dropped from the high summer season. The weather was lovely and warm, only the nights got fairly cool by the last week in October.

Why are we so taken with **Nafplio**? This mid-sized town lies close to some very ancient ruins from the Mycenaean era (1600 B.C.), Mycenae and Tiryns. It is also within 1½ hours' drive to **Corinth**, a 6th century

B.C. ruin. Close to Nafplio is the famous Epidavros theatre, built in the 4th century B.C. The theatre holds 14,000 people and is still used today. The theatre is famous for its acoustics, as it is possible to hear a normal speaking voice from the top 56th row! Epidavros was a health centre during ancient times, and the Greeks are in the process of unearthing the ruins connected to the health centre such as a stadium, a hospice and temples. The Greeks knew, even then, of the interplay of the mind and body in illness. The museum attached to the site shows some of their medical tools for surgery. During the summer there is special public transportation from Nafplio to Epidavros in the evening to see the festival plays. The festival finishes at the end of August. In addition, two Venetian fortresses lie atop Nafplio. A smaller one, the Bourtzi, sits on a tiny island in the harbour. The return fare for a boat out to this island is €1.

Another bonus to the town is that there are some good beaches for swimming within walking distance of the hotel area. A beautiful seaside walkway encircles the part of town where most of the hotels, *pensions* and restaurants are locat-

ed. There are many quiet, pedestrian-oriented streets located here, their historical area. Nafplio was the original capital of Greece after the War of Independence with the Turks. Today the beautiful Venetian and neoclassical buildings are being used for hotels, shops and other businesses.

The harbour is lined with restaurants. Sitting leisurely with a coffee or glass of freshly-squeezed orange juice in the morning while looking out over the harbour and viewing those walking on the wide promenade is a pleasure not to be missed!

A number of restaurants in Nafplio serve good quality food but our favourite was The Old Taverna at 6 Staikopoulou Street. It is the first restaurant in from the

west side of the old town, one of many along Staikopoulou Street. There we found the food consistently good. A typical meal for us with wine would come to €20 – 30 for the two of us. **A l t h o u g h** Staikopoulou Street is technically a street for cars, all the restaurants have tables and chairs out on the street. We chuckled when we witnessed irritated restaurant managers from two restaurants bring out potted

plants and an umbrella, placing them strategically when a car had the nerve to drive slowly past during a busy meal time!

We returned to our favourite hotel from 1996, the Dioskouri, 6 Vyronos & Zygomala Street, 21100, tel: [country code 011 30] 2752 0 28550 – 28644, fax: 2752 0 21202 or you can book online at www.online2greece.com/list.php?catid=173. The hotel sits up on the hill of the town and the address is actually a street that is a long set of stairs. However, there is a parking lot half a block away from the hotel for those who have a car. The Dioskouri is conveniently located with a spectacular view of the palm-tree-lined harbour. From our window we could see the famous town of Argos, where Jason and the Argonauts were from, across the harbour. Although Argos' ruins are mostly still uncovered, above the town lies Larissa Castle, a French/Venetian/Turk ruin built over a thousand years ago. It is easily accessible by bus or car from Nafplio.

The Dioskouri Hotel has spotlessly clean rooms where everything works and the employees behind the desk all speak English. We paid €70 per night for bed and break-



On the harbourside walkway around Nafplio's historical area

fast during the shoulder season. The hotel is not sound-proofed, but we did not find this to be a problem, even when it was used by tour groups. It is a "C" class hotel.

We rented a car from Avis. Prior to our trip we researched car companies via the Internet and concluded that Avis was our best bet. We took a copy of the contract that we wanted from their website to the office in Nafplio. Avis did not disappoint us. We were upgraded to a better car for the same cost and received excellent service. The cost, remembering it was the shoulder season of course, was €390 for two weeks. We discovered that our medical insurance covered us for any car accidents, enabling us to get a lower rate of car insurance. Our prior research helped us save about €150 over a two week period compared with other car companies. The smaller Greek companies in Nafplio appeared to be more expensive than Avis was. We have found that car rental prices need to be researched within each country and each region. No one rule can apply regarding making arrangements before you leave home or after you get there, with an international car company or with a local one.

A word of caution for car drivers: it is said Greeks have the highest rate of accidents in Europe. They drive very quickly and you are expected to get out of the way if a car is coming toward you in your lane. For the

most part, the highways are not the usual standard of those in North America, and in the small towns, the roads are often no more than one lane wide. We wished that we had learned the Greek alphabet before we let ourselves loose on the highways. If the road is busy, it's impossible to decipher the name in time to make the right turn although some of the major towns, of course, are signed in English.

If you take the bus from place to place you will find bus drivers, ticket sellers and supervisors most helpful. We do not speak any Greek apart from "hello," "please" and "thank you" but we did not find the lack of language to be a problem. Many people know enough English to help you and otherwise, sign language does just fine!

There is so much more to see on the Peloponnese. The following are places that we found attractive during our two trips to this region.

Diakofto is a small town on the north coast, approximately an hour's drive from Corinth. It is the start of a cog railway through the steep Vouraraikos Gorge up to the town of Kalavryta. The railway, which climbs 700 metres in 22.5 km, was built about 1895. During WWII, 1,436 males from this town over the age of 15 were murdered by the Nazis here. The town clock has been stopped permanently at that time to remind the people of this tragedy. If you wish to ride the railway, it is mandatory to get tickets as far ahead as possible. Our choice of train times was severely limited even though we tried to reserve the day before, perhaps complicated by a youth group wanting transportation to the upper area that particular day.

Sparta, especially the spectacular Byzantine ruin nearby at **Mystras**, is well worth a stop. Mystras lies on the side of a mountain. We parked our car at the bottom of the hill early in the morning and walked up the road for about 40

minutes to the top before we began our exploration down through the ruin. It took us about three hours to view this amazing ancient community. I doubt that we would have lasted as long had we started from the bottom and walked uphill. The village is not inhabited today, apart from a group of nuns who have a convent there and look after one of the churches. The ruin was built in 1249 A.D. It is not a site for the handicapped, as there are



Epidavros Theatre

many stairs and uneven pathways.

Olympia is a site not to be missed! Not only is the ruin extensively uncovered, but the museum on site is one of the best that we have visited in Greece. There is also another museum about three blocks from the Olympic site on the history of the Olympic Games. Its official name is "The Museum of Olympic Games in Antiquity." This museum is free. It provides many fascinating details about the Olympic Games through the ages and helps to explain details about our present Games.

If you have time and a car, **Vassae** is an incredible temple on top of a mountain about 1200 metres high, about two hours' drive from Olympia. The temple was designed by the architect who designed the Parthenon in Athens. Indeed, the two of them look very similar, although Vassae appears to be in much better condition. It was built about

the same time as the Parthenon – 420 B.C. We have not seen this site since 1996, but our understanding is that it still lies under cover and they still brace many of the huge Doric columns. The Greeks plan to unearth the nearby ruins one day.

Pylos is an enchanting little town with a beautiful harbour on the south-west coast of the Peloponnese. Pylos sports a Turkish-built fortress, heavily restored, as it was used as a prison until the 20th century. Cruise ships dock here and when they arrive, even the priest goes down to greet the visitors!

Pylos is near to **Nestor's Palace**, a Mycenaean ruin from 1300 B.C. I especially enjoyed Nestor's Palace, as it is small, compact and well signed. Many rooms are still intact with walls about a metre high. You can see large storage jugs for wine, water and oil, lined up and embedded in the floor in the "back rooms" where food preparation would have taken place. There is a museum with the antiquities from Nestor's Palace in the nearby village of **Chora**.

Methoni is another small town on the south-west coast of the Peloponnese. It sports a huge Venetian fortress built in the 13th century, surrounded on three sides by water. On the day that we were there, the ocean was wild, crashing into

where they had fresh water and the cave provided protection. There is evidence that the people travelled over to the island of Milos by boat for trading purposes. The museum beside the cave displays pottery and cultural artifacts from that time. Today the Greeks run small, flatboat tours through the cave. I had to duck my head to avoid the odd stalactite! Unfortunately, this civilization came to an abrupt halt when an earthquake occurred at some point, filling in the entrance/exit to the cave.

Near to Gythio are campsites along the ocean. Although there were only a couple of people camping in mid-October, the campsites looked appealing but are probably very crowded during the summer. There were still a few people swimming in the warm, gentle ocean.

Near the end of our trip we discovered another beautiful little harbour town called **Archea Epidavros**, close to the famous theatre site. This town appears to cater to yacht-owning tourists and again there are hotels right beside the water. We had an excellent, reasonably-priced lunch right on the harbourside. Afterward we walked a very short distance on a pathway over to a delightful looking swim area. If we go back, yet again, to the Peloponnese, which we love, we will definitely stay here!

Monemvasia was built in the 6th century A.D. It was undoubtedly altered by the Franks, Venetians and Turks as they subsequently occupied it through the centuries.


the rocks below, a perfect setting for a mediaeval-site movie!

We rested for a couple of days on the south-central coast in a small fishing port called **Gythio**. Gythio used to be the port for Sparta in ancient times and is located due south of Sparta. A number of good hotels sit right along the harbour. In our hotel, the Aktaion, every room had a small sun deck and a view of the beautiful little harbour and sea beyond. There were a number of hotels similar to the Actaion lining the harbour. The Aktaion, a class "B" hotel and reservations can be made by calling 7330 23500, fax: 7330 22294.

Gythio is a good base to travel from to see another famous Byzantine ruin called **Monemvasia**. Monemvasia was built in the 6th century A.D. It was undoubtedly altered by the Franks, Venetians and Turks as they subsequently occupied it through the centuries. The village sits behind a huge rock, accessible by a causeway leading to a narrow parking lot and then a short walk into the town. Similar to Mystras, it sits on a hill with a famous church at the top. Monemvasia is still occupied today, and it is possible to get overnight accommodation right in the village. Unfortunately, when we were there in mid-October, all the signage had been taken down for the winter and the church at the top was closed.

It is possible to remain at Gythio and visit the peninsula to the southwest called 'the Mani'. Not to be missed there are the **Diros Caves**. This cave housed a Neolithic settlement from 4000 – 3000 B.C. People lived underground

On this trip we returned to our favourite hotel in Athens called The Plaka. Although this hotel is fairly expensive for us (about €145 in October for bed and breakfast) we enjoy the central location, their wonderful breakfasts and their efficient service. The hotel sits on a busy street but we had no trouble getting a room on the quiet back side of the hotel. It can be contacted through e-mail: plaka@tourhotel.gr, or visit their website at www.plakahotel.gr. Enjoy exploring Greece!

*As Greece is such a popular destination, it will come as no surprise to note that there's a wide selection of guide books covering all aspects of the country. The Lonely Planet series alone offers **Greece, Greek Islands, World Food Greece, Greek Phrasebook** and their pocket guide to **Athens**. In this city guide, the town of Nafplion is listed as a day trip out of Athens. The Rough Guide series has a volume devoted solely to **Crete**, as well as their comprehensive guide to the whole country, also simply titled **Greece**. And for those who love hiking, Lonely Planet's **Trekking in Greece** is sure to provide inspiration. This magazine has also published many stories on Greece over the years, and for tips for your Athens stay you may like to check out our September 2003 edition. There's also a **Greek Tourist Board** in Toronto: tel 416 968 2220, e-mail grnto.tor@on.aibn.com for information. - Ed. *

Cooking up a Storm in Morocco

story by Jackie DeKnock and photo by Dan DeKnock

I had to pinch myself when we arrived at our villa in La Palmeraie just outside of Marrakech. We could see the 'House of Green Mint Tea' glowing in all its splendour from the gates. What a place! We'll start at the smaller of the two villas: five beautifully appointed bedrooms each decorated in stunning Moroccan style with comfy beds and all the amenities that you could possibly need. The house is centred around a beautiful courtyard and has a kitchen, dining room, terrace, salon and its own swimming pool. We took in the view from the terrace and it's beautiful – it feels as though you are in a scene from an Arabian Nights movie with the date palm oasis surrounding the place and the sunset is especially beautiful with the palms silhouetted against the ever-changing sky..

We explored the larger of the two villas next. It also has a beautiful courtyard as the central feature of the house and on fine days the roof cover can be removed, welcoming the outdoors inside. The eight rooms surround the stunning star-shaped fountain and are beautifully designed and decorated with the bright bold colours typical of Morocco where the love of colour is seen everywhere. The kitchen is very well-equipped and perfectly designed for cooking classes. The dining room, just off the kitchen is so welcoming with a long table and walls decorated with Moroccan paintings.

Soon we were meeting Chef Bouchra and watching her in action preparing our first night's dinner. She is talented and could cook with her eyes closed – without recipes and completely by taste. Bouchra delivers all of the cooking classes on these vacations and has a ready smile for those wanting to learn. I helped out in the kitchen as she prepared a delicious meal which combined Moroccan and French cuisines. Moroccan cooking requires fresh seasonal ingredients; in fact ingredients are purchased daily to ensure freshness. Dinner started with stuffed sardines – a typical Moroccan dish. I was a little skeptical about them at first, but they were delicious. Next we savoured a French-style

chicken with Dijon mustard, green beans and potatoes roasted in butter, garlic and salt, a zucchini gratin, salad and last, but not least, dessert. Oranges were in season, so they were served with most meals but I never tired of them because they were so good and oh so fresh.

We were to experience many of Bouchra's meals and were never disappointed; she puts her loving touch on every dish and it is obvious she loves what she does. Her Moroccan specialities are outstanding



The House of Green Mint Tea

But we did more than cook and eat. We were also pampered with massages, steam baths and facials in the property's beautifully-designed hammam where I experienced a wonderful relaxing massage lying in front of a roaring fire that I wished would last forever. We also explored the bustling city of Marrakech, just 20 minutes' drive away from our little piece of paradise and tranquillity. The old Medina is the place to go for shopping and people watching. The souks carry everything from shoes to lanterns

and fresh produce to leather goods; it's truly a feast for the senses.

We enjoyed our trip to Marrakech but all agreed it was so nice to return to our villa. Being there is an escape to a piece of paradise where time seems to stand still. Peace, spa treatments, comfy beds, cookery lessons and incredible food ... I couldn't wish for a better vacation!

This trip was enjoyed by Jackie deKnock with a view to including it in the lineup of her specialized travel food company Gourmet Safari. Jackie offers hand-picked culinary vacations in Italy, France, Spain and, now, Morocco. Here at TTS we've met Jackie and heard glowing reports of her trips, so we have no hesitation in including this account of how she discovered Morocco. Check out her trips at www.gourmetsafari.com and click on the Photo Gallery for the Exotic Morocco trip to see how wonderful it all looks (or call 1 800 839 5795 for more details). 📷

Walking the Camino de Santiago

story by Barbara Bagnell & photos by Susan Chater

Spain's ancient pilgrim trail, the Camino de Santiago, has beckoned to me since I first read about it, so it was with great excitement that three friends and I began plans to walk some of the historic trail which, since the 9th century, has passed through the same villages and crossed the same rivers. Unlike the pilgrims of old and many of the modern ones, our foursome was not willing to sleep in the multi-bedded rooms in the *refugios* along the way. Neither were we inclined to carry 10-15 kg backpacks.

Enter Garry Budin, an Australian living in Northern Spain, whose company Spanish Adventures was ideal for us. Garry will walk the Camino with a group, or make accommodation arrangements and have luggage transported while you trek the well-marked Camino on your own. After many e-mails to and from Garry, we decided to fly to Bilbao to enjoy its splendid Guggenheim Museum and to see a few other cities before starting the Camino. We also planned to stay two nights in Santiago de Compostela on completing our walk. We designed a 13-night trip, with eight days on the Camino covering 115 km. We'd walk four days, rest one, walk three more days and arrive, triumphant we hoped, in the great cathedral city. Our walking distances varied from 10 to 24 km, averaging about 16 km a day. Occasionally the walking was wet or muddy but more often an easy earthen path. Our longest day, 24 km., still found us at our destination before 3 p.m.

May is the most popular month for walking the Camino; 340 pilgrims finished their walk and were awarded their certificate (*Compostela*) the same day we did. But we never felt crowded nor isolated. Walkers tended to be under 30 or over 55 ... young and free ... or retired and free! We walked with Germans, French, Spanish, Canadians, Americans, Australians and others. Some were physically challenged and some walked in thankfulness or in hope. Looking back, now that I've returned to city life, it seems that those days of walking the Camino were incredibly tran-

quil. We heard no news of the world and thought of little more than where to stop and picnic from our backpacks.

Although some of the descriptions I'd read sounded bleak, we found only beauty. May is Spain's month for wildflowers. Trekking up our longest, highest hill to Ventas de Naron (about 1,500 metres), we found masses of purple heather among the brilliant yellow gorse and broom. We

saw wild foxglove and orchids, and calla lillies growing wild. We picnicked sitting on fallen trees or on the edge of plowed fields or in grassy meadows. Frequently, the panorama in front of us was a valley with a patchwork of fields and old stone houses. On the horizon was our next hill, often covered with eucalyptus trees. Cafés were frequent enough that we could stop for a cold drink or a snack if we wished. Then, at each day's end, we'd find the two twin rooms Garry had booked, our bags already there. Some inns were 3-star, some 2-star and some less, but all were clean and comfortable. Local restaurants' menus-of-the-day were priced between €6.80 and €10 (about C\$10 – \$15)



Walking along the Camino de Santiago

and always included seafood.

The predicted Galician rain never fell. One morning was cold enough for gloves, but by afternoon warm enough for short sleeves. We encountered women herding cattle and sheep, and families making hay. Smiles and greetings were exchanged in villages whose walls had seen visitors like us for the past 1,200 year.

A few words of advice: buy picnic supplies for only a day or two at a time to avoid heavy day packs. We almost always found towns large enough to have supermarkets. Carry drinking water, but frequent refills at taps or fountains are possible and safe. Take time to enjoy your surroundings; the artist in our foursome stopped to do watercolors and always found us at day's end. Walking alone, she had longer

... continued on page 20

For some, hearing the words “volunteers needed” is music to their ears. For others, being denied boarding on a flight spells disaster. Whichever your camp, it’s good to “know the ropes”. Here’s some information on ...

Getting “Bumped”

by Ann Wallace


Airlines regularly overbook their flights because they know that some people with reservations don’t show up. It is estimated that the average no-show rate is about 15%. However, sometimes everyone does arrive for their flight which, of course, means there aren’t enough seats to go around. This is when some passengers get left behind, or ‘bumped’, even though they are holding tickets. Bumping may also occur when airlines have to cancel flights due to weather or mechanic problems. For those with onward connections or for business people heading to an important meeting, getting bumped can mean disaster, but for those with time and flexible travel schedules it can be a good way of making a few dollars and acquiring free flights.

There are two types of bumping: involuntary and voluntary. The former means all the seats have been assigned before you check-in and they plain and simply don’t have a seat for you, while the latter means you decide to give up your seat for some form of compensation. The question of involuntary bumping is a complex one and varies from airline to airline (and remember compensation rules don’t apply to charter flights) so I’m not going to address that here, but if you volunteer to be bumped you merely agree to strike a deal with the airline. This deal is not regulated and will depend on the airline’s staff working at the time and how you negotiate. So, a few tips and ideas may be helpful.

If you really are keen to acquire some of the deals that may come with being bumped, experts suggest making reservations on busy days (i.e. around major holidays, schools ‘out’ or ‘back’) and if a flight is almost full. Internet booking and seat selection makes this easy and you can check major carriers’ seating plans on www.seatguru.com. Experts say that if there are fewer than eight seats available on average-size planes some people will probably be bumped.

We’ve all heard it. An announcement asking for volunteers is made at the departure gate. Often the ‘compensation package’ is spelled out. If you’re interested, speak up, but don’t commit until you’re sure the pain is worth the gain. Compensation for voluntary bumping varies greatly from airline to airline and situation to situation. It is usually based on the length of the flight and the ticket value, so compensation for an international flight will probably be higher than for a domestic flight. But since the airline is anxious to get away on time and resolve the matter as amicably as possible, gate agents often have the authority to adjust the award to the situation and may do so at any time.

Most airlines, in addition to getting you on the next available flight, will offer free tickets or a voucher towards future flights. Whichever you settle on, enquire if there are any restrictions with regard to dates and seat availability. You and your partner may not want to fly separately to Iceland on a Tuesday in February! So ... know all the details of the offer before you agree to accept and get it in writing. And don’t be afraid to ask for more ... an upgrade on your later flight may be readily agreed to and very welcome. Or if your wait is merely for a few hours, request access to the airline’s club lounge where you can spend your time pleasantly. If your new schedule requires an overnight stay the airline must provide hotel accommodation. Ask for details of this; making sure the hotel has airport transportation.

If you are one of the first volunteers, wait before you settle to see if more volunteers are needed. The reward may go up and you want to make sure you get this higher reward too. And if your rebooked flight is also oversold, there’s nothing to stop you doing it all over again! Just remember always to travel with a good book! 

chats with fellow walkers and never felt unsafe. One day, she had a lengthy nap under a pine tree! No matter what your faith or lack thereof, attend the pilgrim mass, held every day at noon in the cathedral in Santiago. The countries from which walkers have come are read out and the huge swinging *botofumiero* (incense burner originally intended to dispel the odour of unwashed pilgrims) is a dramatic sight. If you stop in Melide for a day, visit the historic Monastery of Sorbrado. €10 per person for the return taxi trip.

Contact the Spanish Tourist Office at 416 961 3131 and request their guide to the Camino. Garry Budin can be reached through his website www.spanishadventures.com. His trip cost about \$1,500 per person and included 13 nights' accommodation



Part of the trail through the woods

accommodation lists and much more (even details of a tap that dispenses free wine for the pilgrims!).

with breakfast, bus tickets from Bilbao to Leon, his driving and guiding on two sightseeing days along the route before we started walking at Sarria, taxi to airport or bus station on departure, as well as arranging seven luggage transfers. Buen Camino! 🇪🇸

*Readers interested in this route may also like to invest in a copy of **Walking the Camino de Santiago** by Bethan Davies and Ben Cole, published by Pili Pala Press – www.pilipalapress.com – for C\$25. This book not only contains maps, sections in profile and, of course, a great deal of information on this famous route, but also gives historic details, wildlife information,*

INDEX FOR 2006

ARGENTINA

Touring Sept
Tierra del Fuego Oct
Cruising to Chile Oct

AUSTRALIA July

BRAZIL

Cruising the Amazon Oct

CANADA

Nova Scotia Jan
Yarmouth, NS Jan
Nova Scotia tour Feb
Train to NS Feb
Yukon Feb
P.E.I. Apr
Labrador Apr
Vancouver Island May
Port Perry, ON May
Haida Gwaii June
Calgary & beyond Oct
Nunavut Nov
Tour in the West Nov

Hamilton getaway Nov
Winnipeg Dec

BALTIC

Cruising Jan

BRITAIN

Hampstead, London Apr
Close to London May

DUBAI

Dec

FRANCE

Three rural areas May

GREECE

Dec

JORDAN

Jan

LEBANON

Jan

LIBYA

June

MALTA

July

MEXICO

Colonial Towns Sept

MONTSERRAT

Sept

MOROCCO

Dec

NAMIBIA

Sept

PERU

Touring June
Trekking July

SPAIN

Valdelavilla May
Camino de Santiago Dec

SYRIA

Jan

U.S.A

Alaska Feb
California coast Nov

General Topics

Cruise Security Jan
Cruises – bad news Feb
Getting Bumped Dec

Readers are reminded that Readers' Letters are listed in the 'contents' list on page 2 of each edition.

A new tour

CHINA SILK ROAD

Departing: 15 March & 10 September 2007

Perhaps you are one of the many people who have come with The Travel Society on our China Yangtze Spectacular tour of China? Or perhaps you have always been fascinated by tales of the Silk Road? Whichever the case, we hope you will be thrilled to hear about our new, 20-day Silk Road tour. Come with us from Canada to Beijing, Urumqu, Kashgar, Turpan, Jiayuguan, Dunhuang and Xi'an before ending your tour in Shanghai. Lakes at sunset and mountains at dawn; lush vineyards and spectacular deserts; exotic walled cities and ancient ruins; colourful ethnic minorities, nomads, imams, merchants and saints; Great Bazaars

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing:

Victoria	\$5,490 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$5,370 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$5,500 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$5,500 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$5,620 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,100 pp/dbl
Toronto, Montreal & Ottawa	\$5,670 pp/dbl		
Single supplement	\$1,290 Prices are subject to confirmation		

selling camels and donkeys, carpets and spices; caravansaries, gardens and pagodas; train trips and cultural shows and, would you believe, the 492 Mogao grottoes known as the Cave of the One-Thousand-Buddhas. All this and more you'll experience on this trip. Call us now for the detailed itinerary and start dreaming of discovering part of the fabled Silk Road of China.

Your tour costs includes:

- Round trip transpacific air on Air Canada
- All domestic air and coach transportation
- All transfers and baggage handling
- 4-star accommodations
- 1 sleeper on overnight train
- 3 meals (except on free days in Beijing & Shanghai)
- Daily sightseeing
- Local English-speaking guides

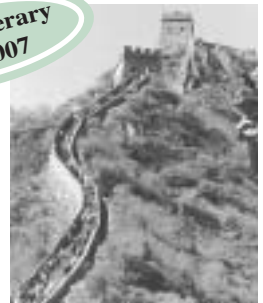
China ... Yangtze Spectacular

FROM \$4,145 FOR 18 DAYS! Departing: 4 April & 26 September 2007

New itinerary for 2007

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 hill-sides 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	\$4,145 pp/dbl	Victoria	\$4,195 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$4,420 pp/dbl	Edmonton	\$4,420 pp/dbl
Saskatoon/Regina	\$4,590 pp/dbl	Winnipeg	\$4,590 pp/dbl
Toronto	\$4,490 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$4,490 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$4,490 pp/dbl	St. John's	\$4,850 pp/dbl
Halifax/Quebec	\$4,850 pp/dbl	London	\$4,850 pp/dbl
Single supplement	\$1,195 (Sharing can be arranged.)		
Taxes and visas extra. Prices are subject to confirmation			

ADD-ON HONG KONG

4 days/3 nights \$1,288 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$54

ADD-ON BANGKOK

4 days/3 nights \$1,185 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$350

ADD-ON TOKYO

4 days/3 nights \$1,375 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$299

ADD-ON KYOTO

4 days/3 nights \$1,450 pp/dbl
Single supplement \$325

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.



A 19-day tour with Cyril Payle at an incredible price ...

Spectacular South Africa

No charge
London stopover

Departures: 1 March & 11 October 2007

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-Toe 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	\$7,680 pp/dbl
Ottawa	\$8,040 pp/dbl
Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Halifax	\$8,040 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$790.00 (sharing can be arranged)

Prices are subject to confirmation

- Pre-tour - Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe ~ 3 days \$1,245 including Air**
- Pre-tour - Victoria Falls and Chobe National Park, Botswana ~ 5 days \$2,456 including Air**
- Post-tour - Namibia & Etosha - Desert Wildlife Experience ~ 4 days \$1,185 including Air**

Your tour includes:

- Return international airfare on British Airways
- First-class accommodation throughout
- Luxury a/c 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

The Grand Tour of Asia

Departing: 2 April 2007

Why fly around Asia when you can take a luxury ship? Our new Grand Tour combines luxurious cruising with 4- and 5-star hotel accommodation in a variety of cities. On this unique 18-night trip you'll spend a total of 6 nights in hotels in the following cities: Kyoto (4-star), Beijing (5-star), Shanghai (5-star) and Hong Kong (5-star). The rest of the trip you'll sleep aboard Holland America's *m.s. Statendam* as

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES departing:

Toronto, Montreal & Ottawa	\$6,950 pp/dbl
Victoria	\$6,900 pp/dbl
Vancouver	\$6,750 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$6,900 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$6,900 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$7,020 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$7,360 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$2,370 Prices are subject to confirmation

- Upgrade to outside large E Cabin \$590.00 pp/dbl**
- Extra night(s) Hong Kong \$190.00 pp/dbl**

A cruising tour of Japan, China and Hong Kong

she takes you from Kyoto to Nagasaki, Pusan, Dalian and Taipai as well as the above destinations. These unique "trips within your cruise" enable you to spend longer than the single day usually offered by cruise lines in the major cities, in all of which you will enjoy guided tours of the highlights. You then return to your ship to sail on to the next city, finally ending your trip in Hong Kong. And this mode of travel means that interspersed with your busy sightseeing days you'll have 5 days at sea; time to relax or take advantage of all that your cruise ship offers so that you arrive in your next destination refreshed and ready to go! It's a wonderful blend of experiences in a unique trip.

Your tour includes:

- Round trip transpacific air on Air Canada
- All transfers (airport/pier/hotel/sightseeing)
- 4- and 5-star accommodations
- Daily American breakfast
- Daily lunch and dinner onboard *Statendam*
- Meals ashore as per itinerary
- *Statendam* inside K Cabin (upgradeable)
- Local English-speaking guides
- All sightseeing admissions
- All local tours

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

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

14 days departing 4 January, 15 February, 8 March & 5 April 2007

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 \$5,995.00 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
- 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

Copper Canyon and Mexico City

Departing: 12 January, 9 February, 9 March, 6 April & 4 May 2007

We are offering a new 9-day tour to Mexico City and 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	\$3,760 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$3,830 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$3,760 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$3,994 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$3,994 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$4,196 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$3,994 pp/dbl		

Single supplement \$798 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation

New itinerary!

Your tour includes:

- All air on Mexicana/Air Canada
- 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

22 days from \$5,995

A Traveller's Turkey

Limited to 20 Members

Departing: 24 April & 11 September 2007

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 Kapadokya (or Cappadocia); mysterious and lovely ruins such as Aphrodisias, Pergamum and, of course, Ephesus; the fabled and beautiful Aegean coast; the peaceful Princes Isles in the Sea of Marmara and so much more.

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

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES: 22 Days

Toronto	\$5,995.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,495.00 pp/dbl
Edmonton	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl	Calgary	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl
Winnipeg	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl	Halifax	\$6,395.00 pp/dbl

Single supplement \$455 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation



Your tour includes:

- Round trip transatlantic flights with Air Canada/Lufthansa/British Airways
- 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

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

Now 23 days

India's Golden Triangle

No charge London stopover

23 days departing 19 March & 23 April 2007

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 all the highlights and more, including camel and elephant rides ... guaranteed to give wonderful photographs! You'll start your tour in Mumbai (once known as Bombay) where you'll visit Dhobi Ghat, the Gateway of India, Marine Drive, the Hanging Gardens, Jain Temple and the Prince of Wales Museum. There will be free time also, perhaps for a little shopping, before you fly to Udaipur, home of the Maharna City Palace, the Jagdish Temple, Garden of Maidens and so many other sites. And here you'll dine in the spectacular 250-year-old Lake Palace that seems to float on an island on Lake Pichola.

A drive to Mount Abu, a beautiful hill resort, comes next, followed by fabled Ranakpur, home of the beautiful Ranakpur Temples. Ancient Jodhpur is next on the itinerary, then it's on to the pilgrimage city of Pushkar with its temple dedicated to Lord Brahma. It's in Pushkar that, if you wish, you will take a camel ride into the sand dunes. The famous Pink City – Jaipur – the capital of Rajasthan comes next and you will spend two nights there, with days full of exciting sightseeing and an excursion to the Amber Fort by elephant. Jaipur is also famous for its bazaar full of wonderful gifts ... and of course you'll spend time there.

Agra is the home of the Taj Mahal and so, of course, it's on

our itinerary too. You'll have an early night and leave before dawn to watch the beautiful Taj revealed by the rising sun. Then it's on to Jhansi by the famous Shatabdi Express train – an incredible excursion. You'll be met by your bus there and driven on to Khajuraho, site of the World Heritage Temples – the eternal images of love. Varansi has been requested by many of our members and we've arranged for this destination to come next. You'll never forget your early-morning boat ride on the River Ganges here, nor the narrow by-lanes of this, one of the most ancient living cities. Your last destination is Delhi, reached by air to allow for plenty of time to see the sights and do some last-minute shopping.

Throughout this trip you will stay in first-class hotels; travel in de luxe 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! Twenty-one days! A life-time time of memories! Come with The Travel Society and enjoy the best of Rajasthan with fellow members!



Your tour includes:

- All international flights with British Airways
- Domestic flights
- Deluxe a/c coach transportation
- Shatabdi Train Fare
- State transport taxes
- All taxes and meals
- English-speaking guides and escort
- All entrance fees
- Elephant ride and Camel safari
- Baggage handling

AIR-INCLUSIVE PRICES: 23 Days

Toronto	\$6,275.00 pp/dbl	Ottawa	\$6,375.00 pp/dbl
Montreal	\$6,375.00 pp/dbl	Vancouver	\$6,548.00 pp/dbl
Calgary	\$6,548.00 pp/dbl	Winnipeg	\$6,650.00 pp/dbl
Halifax	\$6,650.00 pp/dbl		

Single supplement \$1,480 (Sharing can be arranged.) Prices are subject to confirmation

YOUR DISCOUNT VOUCHER FOR RENEWALS, GIFTS AND NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS

Don't let my subscription run out ...

- please: **RENEW MY SUBSCRIPTION** _____
 or **START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION** _____
 or **SEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION** _____

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

- ___ 3 years for \$110.00
 (a 21% saving off the regular \$140.00)
 ___ 2 years for \$79.50
 (a 16% saving off the regular \$95.00)
 ___ 1 year for \$44.00
 (a 10% saving off the regular \$49.00)

All prices include GST.
 ___ my cheque is enclosed, or charge my:
 ___ VISA ___ Mastercard

card #: _____
 expiry: _____ tel: _____
 signature: _____

I agree to pay The Travel Society the above amount in accordance with the card issuer agreement.

Address for **NEW** or **GIFT** subscription only

name: _____
 address: _____
 town: _____ prov: _____
 postal code: _____ tel: _____
 gift message: _____

Send to: *The Travel Society*

218-1033 Bay St Toronto ON Canada M5S 3A5
 Fax: 416 926 0222 e-mail: brit@thetravelsociety.com
 Publications Mail Agreement: # 40063904 & # 09925

Password: nuthatch