

The Travel Society

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Magazine



Calgary and Alberta
Argentina
Cape Horn Cruise
Amazon Cruise

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Editor

Ann Wallace
ann@thetravelsociety.com

Contributors

Sharon Ferguson
Gillian & Ernest Kisman
Linda L. Reid
Ted & Judy van der Veen

Publisher

Nigel D Raincock
nigel@thetravelsociety.com

Administrator

Debbie Philip
debbie@thetravelsociety.com

Graphic Design & Production

Yong Park
yong@thetravelsociety.com

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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

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A statue of Don Remington guards the entrance to the museum that bears his name (Wallace)

editor's letter ...

I'm confused! We're all confused! Seems even the people making and implementing our new security rules are confused. Last month I advised investigating your airline for new regulation guidelines before flying, but one of my colleagues said there was nothing on the website and when she called it seemed there was no live person working at the company.

I travelled through the international airport in Montreal just a few days after the British scare. In the middle of the long security line, two officials stood in front of a table, hands held high waving lighters, matches, drinks, little bottles of gel and various cosmetics. I surrendered to the ever-increasing table of items a lip gloss I had forgotten to pack and then proceeded through security in the usual fashion. My bag was searched in a cursory fashion. When I arrived home I found another, identical, lip gloss in the outer pocket of my carry-on bag.

A couple of weeks later I passed through Zurich Airport. Big signs announced that the new "no liquids, no gels, no aerosols" rule applied only to passengers on flights bound for the UK and the USA. By then, however, to be safe, I had changed my packing *modus operandi*, putting my bathroom kit in my suitcase which, although small, I usually used to check anyway. (If at any time it doesn't arrive at a destination with me I guess that will be another story.)

One good thing has come out of all this ... boarding and settling down on a plane is now so much quicker and less of a hassle. All those road warriors of the past, toting an amazing amount of 'carry on' and 'hand' baggage, have also had to change their *modus operandi*. Now we all get settled much quicker than in the past and there's even room in the overhead bin for my handbag and coat or jacket.



Ann

P.S. Health note ... don't forget the warnings about unsafe water on flights. Now you can't take your own drinks on board do make sure that the water you are offered has come from sealed bottles and not from the plane's tanks. P.P.S. Some new trips coming from The Travel Society. Check them out on our back pages.

Thinking of visiting Tuscany next year? Sharon Ferguson, author of this article, advises you to book well in advance if she has tempted you to Villa La Massa.

A Special Place in Tuscany

This year my husband and I enjoyed a wonderful three-week spring vacation in Tuscany. This was our first trip to this region and our priority was to find a vacation rental where we would be happy staying for our entire three-week holiday, as we were not keen on packing up and moving to different locations. We really wanted to stay somewhere which provided a perfect mix of peaceful atmosphere for rest and relaxation as well as a good centre for interesting day trips for exploration times. We found the perfect place at Villa La Massa at Vertelli in the Casentino Valley, a little more than an hour's drive south east of Florence.

Villa La Massa is a very special place. It exceeded our expectations in so many ways and we can highly recommend staying there. The property is owned by Peter Gosmore and Danieli Dei, two of the most hospitable and lovely people you could ever have as hosts. Peter and Danieli live at La Massa and have created a beautiful self-contained guest suite attached to their home. The accommodation is spacious, modern and lovingly cared for and includes a well-equipped kitchen with modern appliances and lots of dishes and cooking utensils, a large bathroom with a good shower, a lovely bedroom with a very comfortable bed and large closet as well as a large dresser and night tables with reading lamps. The living area is equipped with sofa, chairs, TV, VCR and fireplace, and the comfortable dining area has wonderful views. The whole place is bright and airy due to the many windows and doors that open to the outside. The exterior of the villa is exceptional as well. There is a lovely

swimming pool, deck chairs, terraces, dozens of beautiful flower pots and tiled walkways all kept in perfect condition by the owners. There is nothing around to spoil the beautiful views and the whole situation is one of peace and tranquility.

Peter and Danieli also own a bed and breakfast in Florence, so they have a great deal of experience with hosting guests and they strive to make your stay special by providing a high level of support both before and during your visit. Indeed, many guests spend time at their property in Florence, followed by a week at their Villa La Massa. La Massa is most suitable for two people, but can also provide some extra sleeping accommodation if needed. Please visit their website at www.bnb.it/lamassa/ for more details and pictures. Peter and Danieli can be reached at deimori@bnb.it. Book early to avoid disappointment. (We booked the accommodation in November for our vacation in May/June and at that time the owners already had several reservations for the May to September period.)

The rate for a week at La Massa is in the region of €650 (about C\$925), but we paid a little less as we stayed for three weeks. A rental car is highly recommended for exploring the area.

The Casentino Valley is considered to be one of the most beautiful valleys of Tuscany and here you will find endless opportunities for discovery. Here you will have the chance to explore wondrous ancient hill towns and small medieval villages, to commune with nature in the beautiful forests and woodlands, to venture forth in a place with thousands of years of history, to behold landscapes with ancient castles, to contemplate the art works and treasures of bygone ages and to encounter the silence and peace of timeless spiritual places. These wonderful experiences combined with the gracious friendliness of the local people and the gastronomic delights which abound in this region make the Casentino valley a very special place.

There is wealth of places to explore as short day trips from La Massa. The

medieval hill towns of Poppi and Bibbiena; the spiritual sanctuary at La Verna; the ancient hermitage and monastery of Camaldoli; the National Casentino Forest Park; the beautiful Romanesque churches with their treasures of art; the ancient castles of the Guidi counts; the tiny, quaint, medieval villages of Raggiolo and Quota; and the beautiful Casentino golf course with its amazing views. This is just a short list of the endless possibilities as everywhere you go in this area there is yet another interesting detour to explore.

Places further afield are also accessible from La Massa on full-day trips. If you want to visit the beautiful city of Florence, the bus stops right at the bottom of the road to La Massa. The bus runs fairly frequently and takes about an hour to reach the city. The train service is excellent and is an enjoyable way to travel to Arezzo, the capital of Arezzo province and to Cortona, long considered to be among the "crown jewels" of Tuscan hill towns. The train station at Porenna is a short distance from La Massa and you can park your car for free at the station and purchase your tickets right next door at the bar/coffee shop. A day trip to the Chianti region is worthwhile and while you will likely only have time to see a small portion of this region, I would highly recommend a visit to Volpaia, 7 km north of Radda in Chianti, said to be the most picturesque village in Chianti. Close by, you will find Lamole, the little village which produces the wonderful Lamole di Lamole wines and is the location of the highly regarded Ristoro di Lamole (closed Wednesdays, reservations strongly recommended, tel: 055-854-7050, website www.ristorodilamole.it). Greve in Chianti, the capital of Chianti and the centre of the wine trade, is a nice place to stop for a rest and there are several restaurants and many shops in the lovely Piazza di Greve. Another worthwhile day trip is to Siena, about a two-hour drive from La Massa. Siena truly is, as the

guidebooks say, a medieval city “par excellence”. The Piazza Il Campo is stunning and the Duomo, Siena’s glorious cathedral, is a treasure box of magnificent works of art. There are many other historic sites in Siena, as well as an amazing variety of beautiful shops and restaurants. Another recommended day trip is the Valtiberina Valley, taking in the charming hill town of Anghiari; the pleasant town of Sansepolcro, famous for its lace, pasta and as the birthplace of Piero della Francesca; and the tranquillity of Caprese Michelangelo, the birthplace of Michelangelo.

The Strada in Casentino is the closest market town to La Massa, about a 10-minute drive. It has a good alimentari (small grocery store), a delicious bakery and other shops. Sitting on a hill above the Strada you will find the 11th century Castel San Niccolo with its unique Watch Tower. I highly recommend you have lunch or dinner at the Al Vecchio Teatro La Fiorentina in the Strada. We enjoyed good meals here several times and Hugo, who is one of the owners, speaks Italian, Spanish and English. He is so hospitable and does his best to ensure your dining experience is enjoyable. Indeed, if you only wanted to spend a few days in this area, the Al Vecchio is also an *albergo* (hotel) and I’m sure that it is a comfortable property that Hugo and his partners run with the same great care as they do their restaurant. The rates

at Al Vecchio are €55 for a double room with Italian breakfast. Visit www.alvecchioteatro.it for more details. Hugo’s e-mail address is info@alvecchioteatro.it.

*Sharon Feguson,
Victoria, BC*

After our piece regarding WestJet and upgrades etc., we received several messages agreeing with us. Geoff Walsh’s was the most succinct:

Greetings Ann.

On a recent trip from Toronto to Kelowna on WestJet, I asked a very senior-looking person why they did not offer a business class section? Answer: “If we did, we would not be considered a low cost airline!” But if they removed, say, the first two rows – 12 seats – and replaced them with 8 and charged the difference I would gladly pay the higher price. And it would seem some others would as well.

*Geoff Walsh
Kelowna, BC*

St. Martin Getaway

Last winter, in response to my wanting some warmth, we booked a short Air Canada Vacation to St. Martin and as a result I can genuinely recom-

mend Grand Case Beach Club, a small resort just a five-minute stroll from the village of Grand Case. This is not an all inclusive property and each room or suite has a small but adequate kitchen. Two very quiet beaches front the property with the Sunset Café on a promontory separating the beaches. Breakfast is served in this oceanside café and other meals can be enjoyed there too.

The resort is about 20 years old. Its four buildings of two or three storeys stand in mature, attractively-landscaped grounds. Staff members are very friendly and the resort is kept in immaculate condition as well as being tastefully appointed. The beaches, although fairly narrow, are quiet and the smaller one has a wave-free swimming area. At times we were the only people swimming. The resort provides a very quiet environment (it’s not for teens!) with only water sports available and optional excursions around the island and to nearby Anguilla.

In Grand Case village we found an adequate supermarket which sold some foods and wines imported from France. The village has many restaurants of a high calibre. We, however, favoured a small eatery called Marlin which served delicious light meals and snacks at a fraction of the other restaurant prices. *Lolos* are open-air barbecue and dining areas where locals cook and serve a variety of meats and fish to fellow local people as well as tourists. They have a wonderful atmosphere, if a bit smoky at times.

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There remains in Grand Case some of the 'pre tourist days' atmosphere and there are no modern tourist hotels. There are opportunities to speak French, which we found the people appreciated, although English is the main language of the tourist industry. Many visitors rent a car, but we made our excursions by local bus. They go to the French capital of Marigot and around the island. There is no regular timetabled bus service, instead small vans licensed as buses

come and go during the day and stop when hailed. Fares are very cheap - just one Euro was the fare to Marigot. Roads are narrow, in poor repair and rather busy with no sidewalks which does make walking a bit of a challenge! AC Vacations shuttled us from the airport to the hotel.

I see this property is being offered by Air Canada Vacations again this winter. Or log on to www.grandcase-beachclub.com for other booking options. We enjoyed our stay immense-

ly, spending a lot of time reading on our patio, which overlooked the beach, wandering into Grand Case and swimming. If a quiet getaway beside warm water is what you wish for this coming winter, this resort may fit the bill for you. It certainly did for us. Happy travels!

*Gillian & Ernest Kisman
Toronto, ON*

In these troubled times we thought TS members would be interested to read this news from the United Nations World Tourism Organization

UNWTO Calls for Strengthened Tourism Links to Promote Cross Cultural Understanding and Announces an Initiative to Support Tourism Regeneration in Lebanon

Madrid 13 September 2006. Speaking in Baku, Azerbaijan this week to more than 60 Tourism Ministers from Islamic countries, Francesco Frangialli, UNWTO Secretary General, called on world leaders to use the power of tourism to build new global bridges of understanding between states. He emphasized that "people to people contacts, which only tourism can provide, would do much to counter the vague generalizations and confused perceptions that too often convey distorted images of countries, cultures, traditions and religions."

Frangialli said "Islam, which encourages travel for pilgrimage, has many characteristics in common with tourism such as tolerance, openness and hospitality. This is the reason why so many Muslim countries have long established themselves as successful destinations on the world tourism map. And in so doing, help to diversify their economies, create jobs for young people and, at the same time, revitalize their cultural heritage and awareness."

UNWTO supports such initiatives and through its Global Code of Ethics, promotes the kind of tourism which advances sustainable development, cultural diversity and heritage preservation. The Code also calls on visitors and host communities to show mutual respect and understanding for each others beliefs and lifestyles.

The Secretary General also noted that in the past three years, despite the continuous challenge of man-

made and natural disasters, tourism has remained remarkably resilient. The need to travel for leisure, business, health or even for religious purposes is now deeply ingrained in our modern society; this tends to solidify tourism demand and gives the industry the capability to overcome all the obstacles it encounters on the path of growth. The World Tourism Organization estimates that the number of international tourist arrivals in 2005 topped 800 million, a 5.5 per cent increase following the 10 per cent surge registered the preceding year.

The Secretary General added that it is the duty of the World Tourism Organization to accompany this expansion with support and solidarity with those of its members whose economies and societies are from time to time suffering from crises situations "This is why - in the same way that our General Assembly met in China in 2003 in the wake of the SARS epidemic, and our Executive Council met in emergency session in Phuket, Thailand, one month after the tsunami - we will do our best to hold our Regional Commission for the Middle East before the end of the year in Beirut, Lebanon - a country bruised by the conflict that has taken place on its soil. In this way, we wish to send a strong message of determination and confidence to the tourism industry of Lebanon and the world in general that we believe in the peaceful redevelopment of this country, of neighboring countries and of the region as a whole."

Kensington Riverside Inn



SOME NOTES ON CALGARY and A SHORT TOUR THROUGH SOUTHWESTERN ALBERTA

story and photos by Ann Wallace

Fall is here and, as we all know only too well, that means winter isn't far behind. Time, perhaps, to think about some travels in Canada next year. On the other hand, winter is a great time to visit some of our cities: restaurants are lively, most attractions are open, the cultural scenes are in full swing and why visit a museum during those precious summer days when they are open – and less crowded – during the low season? So this month we are bringing you some news on Canada's latest "hot" city – Calgary – together with some of the excursions you can take from there. Other destinations will follow. It's up to you, of course ... you can plan a winter getaway or file the idea away for visit in more clement weather next year.

It's certainly no secret – Calgary has been much in the news of late as Canada's boom town. Perhaps business will take you there, or perhaps you'd just like to see what all the fuss is about. Whatever your reason, there are many interesting places to visit and things going on in the city and a variety of excellent excursions that can be taken for a day or a longer getaway. I first went to Calgary about 30 years ago, and hadn't returned until a tourism conference took me there in February of this year. No need to exclaim how much it had changed. I was blessed with brisk but bright days and had a great time. Here are the notes I made.

The centre of town is bisected by a pedestrian street, called **Stephen Avenue Mall** or, to be more precise, Eighth Avenue. Where once there were only western-hat-and-

boot-stores and trinket shops, this street is now home to a wide variety of tempting stores and boutiques (but yes, you can still get the hats and boots!) and restaurants that run the gamut from Thai and Vietnamese to a James Joyce Irish pub. There are also many modern sculptures and lots of heritage buildings (including a handsome Hudson's Bay Store) alongside soaring modern office towers. On the 4th floor of one of these towers – TD Square – you'll find **Devonian Gardens**, a pretty place of fountains, sculptures, flowers and walkways. I can't pretend it's one of the world's great gardens, but it is charming and its middle-of-a-shopping/office-tower location is unusual. And, as it adjoins the Eaton Centre food court, it's a popular place for downtowners and visitors alike to enjoy their take-out lunch and a respite if the weather outside is inclement

We had enjoyed our winter walk, but were happy a visit to the 1891 **Lougheed House**, warm home of Peter Loughheed's ancestors, was next on our itinerary. Originally on prairie land, this fine house now stands in a Calgary suburb, though it still boasts an extensive three-acre garden. It is one of the few surviving examples of the early era of grand architecture in the Canadian west. It was restored and opened as a Public Heritage Centre in May 2005. Sadly the house is no longer fully furnished, although pieces that once graced the house are gradually being donated by Alberta residents and re-assembled. But there's plenty to interest in the details: magnificent woodwork, stairways, carved ceilings, original wallpaper and the lower level ballroom. I especially noted the beautiful stained glass windows depicting flowers, birds, butterflies and other fauna of the west. The house has costumed tour guides and contains the pretty Treasures Gift Shop and Isabella's Café ... a welcoming spot to pause for lunch (or English-style afternoon tea) which is what we did.

There's no stopping a museum lover, so soon I was off to spend a few hours in the **Glenbow Museum** in downtown Calgary. This museum's slogan is 'Where the World Meets the West' and it certainly meets that promise with a fine First Nations Gallery as well as Settlement and Development of the West exhibits and frequent major temporary exhibitions. One could spend days here. (The Petra Exhibition was in full swing during my visit, before it travelled on to Ottawa.) I learned that this is an ever-changing museum as only about 5% of their artifacts are on display at any one time. Don't leave Calgary without a visit here.

Meetings were on our agenda for the following morning, but soon our group was in its bus and heading to **Heritage Park Historical Village** for a special tour and lunch. Located on 66 acres along Heritage Drive in Calgary, this is Canada's largest living historical village. Here traditionally-dressed interpreters in dozens of historical buildings reveal three different time periods in the region: the 1860's of fur trading, the times prior to steam and the coming of the railway in 1910 and then the post-train period. It's a fascinating history of transportation and daily life in the west. Original buildings assembled here include early gracious homes, train stations (with a collection of vintage rolling stock), a school, church and rectory, drug store, livery stable, firehall, pool hall, drug store, cabins, the Wainwright Hotel where, in 1908, customers could indulge in fine meals for between 25 and 30 cents, and lots more. Unfortunately if

you're in Calgary in winter you'll find the Village closed (unless, that is, you are with a group that has organized a special visit as I was), but from late May to early September you'll find the attraction open daily, and from early September until Thanksgiving it's open at weekends. It certainly is one of Canada's finest village museums with lots for people of all ages and interests to enjoy.

Of course in just three days I only scratched the surface of all that can be experienced in Calgary. There are many more museums; theatres and other performing arts offerings including the Alberta Ballet and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Art Gallery of Calgary and many other art institutions, the Zoo (a natural-habitat zoo created for injured animals where all species are indigenous to the region) and more. Under that "more" I should mention a special exhibition at Calgary's Nickle Arts Museum (located on the campus of the University of Calgary) on show this winter. Called *Ancient Peru Unearthed*, it's an exhibition of priceless gold treasures from a lost civilization: crowns, masks, ear spoons, headdresses and more. The exhibition will be in Calgary until 14 January 2007, after which it will move east to Toronto's Royal Ontario Museum, to the Art

Gallery of Nova Scotia in Halifax and finally to the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Québec. For those readers in the west it will make an interesting addition to a Calgary winter getaway.

My Calgary explorations had been brief, but before I left, as I always do, I made time to find some accommodations to recommend. If your pockets are deep and landmark hotels

your preference then the **Fairmont Palliser** is for you. Even if you don't stay there, do drop in for a drink in their traditional bar where many visiting dignitaries have sipped a cognac or enjoy their Sunday brunch which is well-loved by Calgary residents.

In the boutique hotel category the **Kensington Riverside Inn** is probably Calgary's finest. Located on the Bow River one block from Riverside, Calgary's trendy 'village', this inn is also just a short walk across the river to the corporate towers of downtown. However, if culture and recreation are your reason for visiting, this is also an excellent location; it's central for most attractions and close to the Light Rail Transit System, yet visitors can stroll to the boutiques, restaurants and cafés of Kensington village and can also enjoy some of the 550 km of riverside bike and walking paths that pass the property. The décor of the 19 rooms (two of them for handicapped guests) is delightful (co-owner Karen Brown was a well-know Calgary interior designer)



View of Calgary from the Riverside Inn

and there's some exciting original art by local artists here. The river-view rooms are especially lovely and there's also a gracious sitting room, an honour bar with hors d'oeuvres, gourmet breakfast, light meals available for room service or to enjoy in the dining room or lounge, and a coffee/tea tray and the morning paper placed at your door.

More homey (and very well-priced) is Calgary's only registered historic B&B.

Twin Gables is a 100-year-old Victorian-style home where a warm welcome from Deidre is assured. Located in the Mount Royal area this home is full of wood panelling and eastern carpets and if you like a house full of antiques and other interesting items you'll love it here. Deidre says many of her guests exclaim "It's like my English grandmother's house!" Don't miss the very special wallpaper in the sitting room: a circular picture of London's Hyde Park in bygone times. I've

never seen anything like it. The large 800 sq. ft. executive suite offers his-and-hers bathrooms and a solarium sitting area/office, while the Mount Royal Suite is 600 sq. ft and boasts a room-size bathroom. There are computers in each of the three rooms and a large garden. From Twin Gables it's a 25-minute walk to downtown and there's convenient public transportation. Again there are lots of restaurants within walking distance of the house and visitors will find the Elbow River and its lovely walks just a block away.

After our meetings and Calgary tours, some of my

fellow conventioners added a few days to their trip and headed into the mountains to ski. I'd planned on a few free days too, but wanted to discover more of Alberta rather than spend time on the slopes. Two colleagues agreed with me, so we put our three heads together.

"We shouldn't leave Alberta without riding a horse," was the first suggestion.

"But it's winter!" the other two of us whined.

"But we've had fabulous sunny weather and it hasn't been cold," we were reminded. "True", we agreed, so we promised we'd find some horses.

"I've heard there's a Carriage Museum somewhere in these parts," declared another writer. "I know a magazine editor who, I think, would like a story on it." We agreed it sounded fine.



The wooden horse used for your first riding lesson at homeplace Guest Ranch

Then it was my turn. "Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is my first choice," I said firmly. "I've wanted to visit there ever since I heard the name!" So Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump was added to the itinerary. (I've also long wanted to visit the Badlands and the Royal Tyrell Museum of Paleontology, but we agreed we wouldn't have time on this trip. But one day soon I hope to return to the region for that excursion. You'll find full details in the Calgary guide mentioned below as it's another easy

excursion from the city.)

Soon we were consulting with the friendly folk at Tourism Calgary and making plans. We were told that we could follow part of the Cowboy Trail, heading south on

Hwy. 22 as far as Waterton Lakes National Park, then turning to the east to Cardston and finally heading north on Rte. 2 back to Calgary in time to catch our flights home. Along the way we could do the things we had expressed interest in and also see some small towns made famous by the movies. Sounded good. A car was arranged and soon we



Our view of the mountains as we head south to Waterton

were off.

We'd decided to get the horse riding part out of the way first, so that we 'tentative two' could relax! We needn't have worried. The tourism experts had known where to send us. The **Homeplace Guest Ranch** is located near the town of Priddis in the heart of Alberta's high cattle country about 45 minutes' drive southwest from Calgary. This 1912

homestead has family memorabilia and pets indoors, miles of riding trails, horses and wildlife outside and owner Mac Mackenny to teach or improve your riding. The youngest a child can ride here is seven, the oldest that has been taught to ride is 82. Although the ranch is open year round, riding usually takes place only between April and November, but Mac had made an exception for us as there was no snow on the ground. We didn't go far, but we all had to admit it was great to be on a horse in the great Alberta outdoors.

Over a hearty lunch at the ranch house we learned the 7,000 square acre ranch stands on Stoney Indian land with Blackfoot country nearby and Mac has many fascinating stories to tell. "Even today the tribes don't mix much," he told us. The property welcomes no more than 14 guests at a time (you'll notice some familiar and famous faces on their photo board) and it's just like being a house guest ... you are encouraged to wander into the kitchen and help stir the pot of beans! If you wish to leave the bean-stirring to others you can just sit back and enjoy the comfy sofas, warm stove if its chilly, and the books and games, as you await the ranch-style meals served family style at the big table: bbq steaks, turkey, ham, potato casserole, beans and salads, brownies, cookies and ice cream. Riding, or learning to, is the main activity here, but there are many other things to do: visit Spruce Meadows for international show jumping (June and September), the Calgary Stampede Rodeo (July) or enjoy the 'Flavour of the Foothills' October gourmet event with its demonstrations on organic farming, brewery and berry farm visits and more. Visitors to the ranch are 40% Canadian, 40% American and 20% European, with the Europeans mainly from Britain. Mac says, "We aim to have people leave with a sense of history of the ranch and of the area after good times with good food. We also teach safety and respect for the horse." It's the perfect, low-key place to enjoy a ranching/homestead experience and a great place to take children or grandchildren if they are interested in learning to ride. If you're a city slicker you don't have to go anywhere near a horse, but after meeting Mac you may change your mind!

We had been told the little town of **Longview** would be a convenient place to stop for the night, so we drove on and made that our next stop. Apparently *The River of No Return*, starring Marilyn Munroe and Robert Mitcham, and Clint Eastwood's *The Unforgiven* had been filmed here. If it was good enough for them, it was good enough for us, or so we thought! Well, to be honest, if you're not starring in a movie you won't need to stay long, but we found the **Blue Sky Motel**, where we laid our heads, to be basic but clean, with touching efforts such as lots of towels and a chocolate on the pillow at turndown. Next door,

the **Memories Inn Restaurant**, where we had dinner, certainly did provide memories. Once a general store, this eatery is now like a little museum, one of those quirky places where pride of ownership (if not exactly good taste) is evident: there's lots of First Nations memorabilia, wine bottles with candle drips, silk flowers, flags from around the world, hearty food from the Greek chef and lots of film posters and photos for movie buffs. Only two (cheap) wines were on the list, so we settled for a whiskey or two and discussed whether we felt like movie people or cowgirls!

We drove on south next morning, thrilled by the brilliant sunshine, by the enormous sky and by the spectacular views of the snow-clad foothills and Rocky Mountains to our right. The roads were clear and the plains surrounding us were golden with dry grasses. We agreed it was a fine time to be on a road trip in southern Alberta even though the famous Bar U Ranch, now a National Historic Site and the major attraction of the Longview area, was closed for the winter. We drove past it and then noticed the signs to Crow's Nest Pass on the AB/BC border. We'd been told we could get an excellent lunch in **Waterton Lakes National Park** and this turned out to be the case. After pausing to take photos of that famous landmark – the Prince of Wales Hotel (also not open in winter) – we discovered the **Kilmorey Lodge**, situated lakeside in the village, was anything but closed. This historic inn with its excellent dining room and cozy rooms was abuzz with vacationers. "We have an abundance of wildlife in winter, cross-country skiing, skating, snowshoeing, outstanding opportunities for photography, and such a cozy atmosphere that people love us as much in winter as in summer," the receptionist told me as I requested a brochure. "Perhaps we could stay the night here," I suggested to my friends. But then the thought of missing the Carriage Museum or Head-Smashed-In entered our minds and we all agreed to stick with our plans. We had a great lunch, however, and took a short drive in this spectacular park that we all said we must visit again one day.

The strange town of



At the Remington Carriage Museum

Cardston is about 40 km due east of Waterton Park. It was established in 1887 by Mormon pioneers from Utah, led by one Charles Ora Card, who travelled to Alberta in one of that century's last covered-wagon migrations in order to escape persecutory laws in the United States. Today it is a quiet, conservative community comprised mainly of Mormons and First Nations people, about 3,500 in all. An enormous Mormon temple dominates the skyline, while the Blood Indian Reserve – the largest in Canada – abuts the town's border. It saddened us when we noticed the inequality that exists here between these two diverse groups of people.

Quiet Cardston may be, and not terribly attractive, but we found lots to interest us. I must admit I've never seen the movie *King Kong*, but my travelling companions were intrigued to find that Cardston was the birthplace of Fay Wray and we had to stop to take photos of her memorial on the main street. Then we were off to the **Remington Carriage Museum**. I can't pretend I'd been very interested in this excursion, imagining a small museum in an equally small and out-of-the-way town. But how wrong I was. Described as the "most spacious and best equipped purpose-built carriage museum in the world" by the Journal of the Carriage Association of America, this museum does indeed hold the largest collection of horse-drawn vehicles in North America. Here over 250 carriages can be seen in 63,000 sq. ft. The museum was built 13 years ago by the province for \$16 million to house the donated collection of Don Remington, who began collecting carriages in 1954 when he restored a cutter to bring Santa Claus into town for the Christmas celebrations. His collection grew to 48 vehicles and more vehicles were added from various museums throughout the province.

The 15-minute introductory movie showing some street photos from the past makes one glad to live in the modern age, even with traffic jams! At least we don't have to deal with manure-strewn streets and the occasional dead (and ignored) horse lying around. The restoration gallery was the next site to fascinate us. Here visitors can watch the restorers busily at work, trying to keep up

with the demand for the commercial restoration of sleighs, carriages and other vehicles destined for carriage-ride companies, for the movies and for other museums. Then it was in to the galleries holding the main exhibits. You could spend an entire day here, for if you were to read all the text panels and watch all the videos and engage in all the interactive exhibits it is estimated it would take eight hours! But overview tours take about two hours. During this time we learned the history associated with covered wagons and their role in opening the west and the lives of the early settlers. We admired the barouche used even today for ceremonial purposes – the Queen and many Prime Ministers have ridden in it on Alberta visits. We made notes about jaunting cars, broughams, bob-sleighs, five-pumper fire wagons, school vans, milk and ice wagons, stagecoaches used in movies, an English stagecoach (or mail coach as it was known as there) and learned to tell the difference between landaus, phaetons and cabriolets. We saw a fine example of a Hansom cab (the proper name of which is Mr Hansom's Safety Cabriolet), the carriage so often seen in foggy London night scenes in movies of Dickens' novels, Sherlock Holmes tales and many others. We were told the museum's most valuable piece is the Hansom Cab once owned by Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt of New York, who perished when the *Lusitania* sank after he had given his lifejacket to a female passenger. (Ironically, a few years earlier, he had reserved a place on the *Titanic*, but for reasons unknown had cancelled his passage.) We laughed at the fact that in 1906 a two-seater buggy could be bought from the Sears Catalogue for \$26.95. And we were especially captivated to learn from our guide how the world of horse-drawn vehicles has influenced our language: insiders vs. outsiders, to listen in, throwing one's weight around, king pin, shoulder to the wheel, chomping at the bit and why, even today, a dashboard is called a dashboard. The Remington Carriage Museum has been the winner of 'The Best Indoor Attraction in Canada' award (by Attractions Canada); it deserves every accolade it receives.

After such a great day we were happy to freshen up and relax for an hour in our hotel, the South Country Inn on Main Street, close to the museum. It's a functional kind of property, but our welcome was warm and it was convenient. However, an hour later our enquiry "Where's the bar, or *any* bar?" was met with some wide-eyed confusion as, it turned out, (not surprisingly we told ourselves later) that the area is 'dry'. We were disappointed not to be able to toast a successful day, and I wryly thought of my old grandmother's advice: "Never travel any-



Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump

kind of property, but our welcome was warm and it was convenient. However, an hour later our enquiry "Where's the bar, or *any* bar?" was met with some wide-eyed confusion as, it turned out, (not surprisingly we told ourselves later) that the area is 'dry'. We were disappointed not to be able to toast a successful day, and I wryly thought of my old grandmother's advice: "Never travel any-

where without a hip flask, dear.” Oh well, never mind, we said as we set out to find the town’s most famous restaurant, **Cobblestone Manor**, for what was obviously going to be a wine-less dinner. But all was forgiven when we discovered the restaurant was to provide us with another story!

The house built of rocks known as Cobblestone Manor, now designated as an Alberta Historical Resource, was built by a Mr Harry Hoet, a Belgian immigrant who became known as one of Alberta’s eccentrics. He bought this piece of land close to a creek where, in about 1913, he began building a fabulous mansion out of rocks found in the river, hauling them in a cart in summer and a sleigh in winter, helped by his faithful Newfoundland dog. He finished the house with pieces of exotic woods left over from the nearby Mormon Temple and from the Prince of Wales Hotel in Waterton. He painstakingly created fabulous ceilings, built furniture and finished the rooms with authentic Tiffany glass. All this, it is said, was for a sweetheart waiting at home in Belgium. Sixteen years passed and eventually Mr Hoet considered the home worthy of his love; he sent for her only to discover she had married someone else years earlier. Perhaps they should have written more often! Perhaps she didn’t exist! In any event, poor Mr Hoet went insane and eventually the house was sold to pay his hospital bills. Some believe the house is haunted. (If you’re comfortable with

sunk into a cliff with earth and grasses pulled back over the top of the building after it was constructed. It is barely visible from the plain below.

As the information guide states, “The site bears witness to a custom practiced by native people of the North American plains for nearly 6,000 years. Thanks to their excellent understanding of topography and of bison behaviour, they were able to kill the animals by chasing them over a precipice.” Sounds easy, but it wasn’t, and that’s what one learns here: how the Blackfoot hunters disguised themselves with animal skins such as those of wolves to trick the buffalo, whose eyesight is poor; how the hunt was well planned, stealthy and strategic with only a few hunters needed to create the desired stampede over the cliff; how the rest of the tribe would be waiting at the foot of the cliff to do their part and how every part of the hunted animal would be used. Most prized was its meat of course, first fresh then dried, then the hides were used for tipis and clothes, the brains of the animals treated the hides and made them supple and the bones were made into utensils and jewellery.

It was also surprising to learn that the smashed-in head refers not to the buffalo, as I had assumed, but to the legend of a young brave who hid under the shelter of a cliff ledge to witness the fall of the beasts. But, apparently, the hunt was especially good that day and the young man became trapped

The Blackfoot hunters disguised themselves with animal skins such as those of wolves to trick the buffalo.

ghosts you may also stay here as the property is, in fact, a B&B as well as a restaurant. We would have welcomed a stay but didn’t know about it and, in any case, the two rooms were occupied. However, we enjoyed our dinner and were pleased we hadn’t missed this piece of Cardston history.)

On looking around the house we noticed a small exhibition of unusual art work. “It’s Colleen Yuill’s scratchboard art,” our host Marsha told us. “She lives nearby. If you’d like to meet her why don’t you come for breakfast tomorrow morning and I’ll invite her over.” Eager journalists that we were, we readily agreed and had a delightful visit with Colleen the next morning. Colleen described her labour-intensive scratchboard technique whereby images are created by scratching heavily ink-coated paper, made especially for this kind of art, with a small knife. Her subjects are drawn from the wild and the outdoors – animals, birds, flowers, farm scenes and celebrations of Alberta life such as the rodeo, horse jumping and the wagon train. I was happy with my purchase: one of her limited-edition prints of an owl entitled ‘Silent Watcher’.

With our tummies full of Cobblestone’s hearty breakfast, we hit the road again for the drive to **Fort Macleod** and one of Canada’s 13 UNESCO World Heritage Sites: **Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump**. Architect Robert LeBlond won the Governor General’s Award for Architecture in 1990 for the Interpretive Centre here. It is comprised of five tiers

between the animals and the cliff. He was eventually found, with his skull crushed, and thus his people named the site “Head-Smashed-In”.

All this long history, be it fact or legend, is described by guides, artifacts, a film and on the trails outside. The movie ends with the firing of a gun, at which point spectators exit the theatre into a hitherto unseen gallery which demonstrates a later history, a time that saw the arrival of the horse and the gun. Out of the 250 known buffalo jump sites in the United States and Canada, this is considered to be the best. Although the bones had their uses, most of them were left to pile up and in modern times were taken by bone pickers who shipped them elsewhere to be transformed into gun powder, fertilizer and other commodities. But at Head-Smashed-In the bones had been buried along with many other historical artifacts and the site had remained undisturbed. Some more figures: it is estimated about 60 million buffalo used to roam the plains before the arrival of Europeans, between 75 and 150 would be killed in each hunt and Head-Smashed-In welcomes 80,000-90,000 visitors a year. We were glad to be among that number ... we’d had a wonderful morning. The Centre and most of the outdoor trails are handicapped accessible, there’s a gift store with a selection of aboriginal arts and crafts and a café.

Our only criticism of the above Interpretive Centre was that the café looked a bit gloomy, so we decided to drive the

18 km back to Fort Macleod for a late lunch. There, in the little town where scenes from the movie *Brokeback Mountain* were filmed, we found **Johnny's Chinese Restaurant**, a bright unpretentious drop-in place (complete with TV!) where John Tsai (once a Fairmont chef) served one of the best soups I've ever tasted ... a broth full of noodles, crisp bright vegetables, sliced pork, shrimp and Chinese dumplings! "Yes, I'm very busy, especially in summer, with Head-Smashed-In visitors," John told us.

Our little trip was nearly over. **The Bluebird Motel in Claresholm**, just north of Fort Macleod and within easy reach of Calgary for our next day's flights, had been recommended. We'd made a face at the word 'motel' but had been assured we'd be surprised. And, indeed, we were. This award-winning, 23-room property is most definitely designed on a motel basis with room for your car outside your door, but what an unexpected delight the rooms (or 'units') were. Each has been decorated with a theme: there's the Stampede Room, the Bunkhouse, the Gone Fishing Room, the Homestead, and – mine – the Gene Autry "Singing Cowboy" Room complete with posters and musical instruments. If you ever need a place to lay your head in this part of the world the Bluebird Motel will fit the bill.

To be honest there's not much to see or do in tiny Claresholm although there's an enormous Frontier Western Shop in which to browse. As two of us did this, late in the afternoon, our horse-loving friend came to find us as she had discovered the Museum and Archives of the Appaloosa Horse Club, another interesting little spot in which to pass an hour.

And so our brief journey through southwestern Alberta came to an end. We'd done 'horsey' stuff, seen the plains and the mountains and the big sky, glimpsed the beauty of Waterton, eaten some good meals and enjoyed two outstanding museums. As the three of us – previously just colleagues, now firm friends – bade each other farewell back in Calgary we agreed it had been an out-of-the-ordinary and enjoyable few days in a part of the world none of us had explored before.

Some details ...

* **As with all major Canadian cities, Tourism Calgary** publishes a comprehensive Visitors Guide which covers the city, the Alberta Rockies and other nearby destinations. For your copy call 1 800 661 1678 or visit www.tourismcalgary.com

* **Lougheed House**, open 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closed Monday. Lunches and tea available in Isabella's Café. Tel:

403 244 6333, www.LougheedHouse.com

* **Glenbow Museum**, tel: 403 268 4100, www.glenbow.org

* **Heritage Park Historical Village**, tel: 403 268 8500, www.heritagepark.ca

* **Ancient Peru Unearthed**, at the **Nickle Arts Museum** now until 14 January, tel: 403 220 7234, www.ucalgary.ca/~nickle/

* **Palliser Hotel**, tel: 1866 540 447, on line b&b packages from \$169 double at www.fairmont.com/palliser/

* **Kensington Riverside Inn**, rates from \$159, tel: 403 228 4442 or 1 877 313 3733, www.kensingtonriversideinn.com. This property is listed in the *Charming Inns of Alberta* brochure, a compilation of ten inns around the province. For your copy call 1 877 478 4667 or visit www.charminginnsofalberta.com

* **Twin Gables B&B**, tel: 403 271 7754, www.twingables.ca, double rates from \$89.

* **Homeplace Ranch**, tel/fax: 403 931 3245, www.homeplacerranch.com, 4-day packages \$785, 7-day \$1,352. Rates

include accommodation, all meals and snacks, riding and other activities. Other packages for the Calgary Stampede and Spruce Meadows events available which include tickets and transportation. Airport transfers also available.

* **Blue Sky Motel**, Longview, tel: 403 558 3655, rates from \$70.

* If you plan to be near Longview in summer you

find details of **Bar U Ranch** – "one of the most famous ranches in its time" and now a National Historic Site, located about 1½ hours from Calgary, at www.pc.gc.ca or call 1 800 568 4996.

* **Kilmorey Lodge** in Waterton Lakes National Park (highly recommended), tel: 1 888 859 8669, www.kilmoreylodge.com and www.watertonpark.com, winter rates from \$99, summer from \$129.


* **Remington Carriage Museum**, tel: 403 653 5139, www.RemingtonCarriageMuseum.com, open daily except major holidays, admission \$9 or less.

* **Cobblestone Manor**, tel: 403 653 2701, www.thecobblestonemanor.com, menu details on website, to stay \$75 double or \$150 for an apartment for 4 or 5.

* To contact artist **Colleen Yuill** of Cardston call 403 653 3883. Her limited edition prints are priced from \$35.

* **Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump**, tel: 403 553 2731, www.head-smashed-in.com, open daily except major holidays, admission \$9 or less.

* **Johnny's Restaurant**, 225 Main Street, Fort Macleod, tel: 403 553 3939.

* **Bluebird Motel**, tel: 1 800 661 4891, www.bluebirdmotel.ab.ca, rates from \$69. 



The Gene Autry "Singing Cowboy" at the Bluebird Motel



View of Harberton from guest cottage verandah

Last month we brought you some notes on travelling through Argentina. Now TS member Linda Reid tells about one specific Argentinian destination in detail.

Estancia Harberton, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

story and photo by Linda L. Reid

“Estancias”, usually translated as “ranches”, are an important part of the tourist infrastructure in Argentina. They can include large theme-park-like attractions, luxury lodges with swimming pools or historic properties such as Estancia Harberton, located on the Beagle Channel in Tierra del Fuego, the large island south of South America. Our four nights at the Estancia Harberton were the highlight of our March visit to Tierra del Fuego.

In the 1850s the English missionary, Thomas Bridges, came from the Falkland Islands to Ushuaia on the Beagle Channel (the southern shore of the big island of Tierra del Fuego) to work with the native peoples, the Yamanas. When he retired from the mission in 1886, the Argentinian government granted him land about 70 km due east. There he established Estancia Harberton, named for his wife Mary’s home-

town in Devon. Thomas is the author of a Yamana /English dictionary and his son Lucas Bridges wrote *Uttermost Place of the Earth*, about growing up among the Yamanas. The museums in Ushuaia include photographs and information about the Bridges family and their activities as Thomas and Mary Bridges had the first white child born in Tierra del Fuego.

The Estancia Harberton is now managed by Thomas Bridges’ great-grandson, Tommy Goodall and his American-born wife Natalie, who is an active biologist. They live in the big house that is in typical Fuegian style, made of wood covered in corrugated iron. The original part of the house was pre-fabricated by Mary’s carpenter father in Devon in the 1880s and sent in numbered pieces to the site to be assembled.

There are also two guest cottages, located on the shore of Harberton Bay about 200 metres from the big house. The

cottage we stayed in was once the shepherd's cottage. It now has two guest rooms, each with its own bathroom and a small common kitchenette for making tea and coffee located in the entrance hall. Each room has three single beds. The mattresses weren't the greatest, but the room was large and comfortable with its propane heater. The kitchenette has a propane water heater that provided hot water on demand to the two bathrooms. It was necessary to co-ordinate the timing of showers. This wasn't a problem for us as we were travelling with my husband's brother and sister-in-law who occupied the other bedroom. There was electricity from 7 pm to midnight when the family turned on the generator. I didn't see inside the second cottage but it apparently has two rooms with single beds each and a shared bathroom.

Natalie Goodall has collected bones of marine mammals for years. She has built an impressive small museum on the property called Museo Acatushún de Aves y Mamíferos Marinos Australes and visiting scientists and science students live above it. We spent a whole morning visiting the museum and had a personal guided tour in English by a visiting veterinarian. One of the estancia staff took us on a tour of the historic spots on the estancia, including the family graveyard. The estancia property includes an island in the Beagle Channel that is home to both Magellanic and Gentoo penguins. We had a short trip there in a Zodiac and were able to walk among the penguins. We also took long walks along the shore of Harberton Bay and the Beagle Channel.

My hobby is genealogy and I was fascinated by the displays of the Bridges/Goodall family history on the walls of the tearoom. We had most of our meals in the tearoom but for dinner two nights we joined the family in the dining room in the big house. Tommy and Natalie Goodall had many stories as did the other paying guests: a scientist occupying the other cottage who had just finished the season serving as interpretive staff member on a cruise ship to Antarctica, and a young relative and her friend visiting the family from Zimbabwe. It seems that two sons of the original Thomas Bridges had gone from Tierra del Fuego to Southern Rhodesia and had established ranches there.

The estancia kept sheep until 1995 when they switched to cattle. The cattle spend winter outdoors along the shorelines, despite the fact that the snow can accumulate to a depth of three metres.

It is about 90 km by road from Ushuaia to Harberton, the last portion over gravel roads. We were picked up at the airport in Ushuaia by a transfer company, All Patagonia, and taken in a van with a driver and an English-speaking guide to Estancia Harberton. All Patagonia handled all our other travel arrangements in Tierra del Fuego. There is no local bus transportation and you would need to arrange with one of the transfer companies to take you to Harberton and to pick you up.

Estancia Harberton is featured on a number of day trips. Some packages bring people from Ushuaia for a two-hour visit. Guests are able to tour the estancia or visit the marine mammal museum. An independent operator keeps both a

boat and a Zodiac at the estancia and brings groups to see the penguins. They have about half an hour at the estancia and then go by zodiac to land on the island with the penguins or by boat to go around the island and look at the penguins from the water. Tommy Goodall limits the number of visitors on the penguin island to fifteen at one time. Some of the longer catamaran trips along the Beagle Channel from Ushuaia come as far as the mouth of Harberton Bay. These trips would give a glimpse of what we were able to enjoy staying on the estancia.

If you visit the penguin island, you will have an opportunity to see both Magellanic and Gentoo penguins. Visitors are asked to follow a set route, but the penguins walk anywhere. I don't recommend lying on the stony beach, as I did in an attempt to get a better picture. The rocks looked clean but my clothes certainly weren't afterwards.

Tommy and Natalie are both native speakers of English. They are assisted during the tourist season by young hospitality students who have a good command of English so communication isn't a problem. The Goodalls refer to their estancia as a farm.

In the early 1900s some sons of the original Bridges family established a second estancia, Viamonte, on the other side of the Andes (which in Tierra del Fuego run east/west) on the Atlantic coast south of Rio Grande. It is now managed by Tommy Goodall's brother's family and also takes paying guests.


It took some time for our travel agent to make the booking for Estancia Harberton through the local transfer agent as the family only picks up mail and email when they are in Ushuaia. But it's worth the effort. If you are a history buff, you wouldn't be able to find a better spot to see Tierra del Fuego and learn about its past and present.

We also spent two days in Ushuaia. We took a catamaran tour on the Beagle Channel, visited the National Park and several small museums.

Many people come to Tierra del Fuego only to catch a cruise ship to Antarctica from Ushuaia. If you are coming that far, do plan to see more of the island. There is no road connection to nearby Chile as the Chilean road system doesn't extend that far south. You can, however, visit the southern Chilean islands by water, but that's another story. (*See following article - Ed.*)

Estancia Harberton: <http://estanciaviamonte.com/Harberton.htm>, e-mail: ngoodall@tierradelfuego.org.ar

The Web address for Estancia Viamonte is: <http://estanciaviamonte.com/index.htm> Viamonte is managed by Tommy's brother. Both estates are owned by the extended family.

All our arrangements, including transfers to and from Harberton and the penguin tour, were by All Patagonia, Juana Fadul 60 (9410), Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, tel: [011 54] 2901 433622, fax: [011 54] 2901 430707, e-mail: allpatagonia@allpatagonia.com 

A Short Cruise from Argentina to Chile via Cape Horn

Aboard the m.v. *Mare Australis*

story and photo by Linda L. Reid

The m.v. *Mare Australis* sails weekly during the October to April season from Punta Arenas, Chile, to Ushuaia, Argentina, and back via the infamous Cape Horn. The whole cruise lasts a week and the ship takes a different route each way, but many people just travel in one direction. We chose to take the three-night segment from Ushuaia to Punta Arenas, leaving on a late Wednesday afternoon.

Our transfer agent took us to the company office in Ushuaia in the early afternoon. We checked in and left our bags and passports and were then free to wander the town until it was time to board the ship at 5 p.m.

The ship can accommodate about 175 but there were only 108 on our sailing as it was mid-March and the beginning of the shoulder season. The cabins are on four different decks, all with windows above the water-line. We were in one of the cheapest cabins on the lowest deck but saw no reason to pay more.

The passengers were an international mix: Spanish-speaking from South America and Spain, Portuguese-speaking from Brazil, English-speaking from many places, French, German and others. The tables in the dining room were divided by language. Our table included a couple from the Netherlands who spoke excellent English. As with many other cruise ships, the dining room was noisy, but the food was good and dinner was accompanied by wine. Breakfast was buffet-style and there was table service at the other meals. The bar was complimentary and there was always hot wine and other beverages waiting for us after our shore excursions.

The interpretative programmes were offered in both English and Spanish with French and German being used for announcements as well. The English-language lectures were in the Sky Lounge on the top deck so we could watch the scenery pass as we listened. One time a lecturer diverted from his script to point out an albatross flying near the ship



Abandoned naval building on Navarino Island

and answered our questions on this bird. We were free to go onto the bridge at any time and there was a special tour of the engine room (for which we had to wear ear protection) for those who were interested. The crew was always attentive, friendly, and safety-conscious.

Soon after departure we anchored off Navarino Island (opposite Ushuaia). We were now in Chilean waters and customs agents

came aboard and processed all the paperwork while we were at dinner. (Canadians arriving in Chile by air have to pay an expensive visa fee but this didn't apply to us as we arrived by sea.) The ship then headed out to Cape Horn. Unfortunately it was too rough to land to climb to the albatross monument, so the captain sailed around Cape Horn Island instead and we were able to see the monument and the dramatic Cape itself from the ship.

But there were three other excursions on the itinerary. Coming back from Cape Horn we landed at Wulaia Bay to hike on the west coast of Navarino Island. This is the location of an early native settlement and mission and later a Chilean naval base, now abandoned. Archaeologists are just starting work here and they are planning displays for the former naval building. After disembarking from the Zodiac I took my glasses off to wipe the spray from the lenses and then I put them back on over the chin strap of my Tilley hat. I hadn't bothered with the back strap so when, in mid-hike, my hat blew off, it took my glasses with it! I was able to retrieve my hat but couldn't find the glasses anywhere among the tall grasses. (Fortunately I had another pair with me.) I left an incident report with the ship's crew and was amazed when, a few weeks later, the cruise company e-mailed me to say that a crew member had found my glasses on a subsequent visit to the island. They sent them to me by courier. I was really impressed.

The next part of the cruise was through the beautiful fiords of the Chilean islands at the south of the continent. The ship's boutique sold yellow rainsuits and we were glad

... continued on page 18

Cruising the Amazon Rainforest of Brazil

story and photo by Ted & Judy van der Veen



The m.v Tocano

Think hot and steamy as mid-July in southern Ontario, but with no concrete in sight, only trees, water and the flora and fauna that occupy them. Picture the *African Queen* of the classic movie, and imagine yourself sitting on the deck of a similar riverboat with a small group of nature-loving fellow travellers from Canada and the USA. Just steps below are an air-conditioned dining room and double cabins. It is late February/early March and you have left the winter cold behind you. A long flight or two have deposited you in Manaus, deep in the interior of Brazil, 1600 km upriver from the Atlantic Ocean. Less than a day out of Manaus, and you have left all signs of modern civilization behind. For the next several days, the people you see will be your travelling companions, your local guides, the boat's crew, and a few fishermen and native families who live in small villages along the banks of the broad Rio Negro, a main tributary of the mighty Amazon. But wildlife abounds; you will see and hear a myriad of brightly-coloured birds, hear and see signs of the passage of larg-

er animals, although you are not likely to see them. Plant life is also varied, with several flowering trees in bloom, and exquisite orchids covering their host plants. Hot and steamy it is, with very high humidity, but when the boat is in motion, there is always a cooling breeze off the water. We generally had sunny weather, with one or two downpours to prove we really were in a rainforest.

For ten days, this is our daily routine: wake-up call at 5:30 a.m., hot and cold drinks and snacks available in the dining saloon to tide us over; departure at 6:00 on the first of the day's outings in the two motorized wooden long canoes through calm waters to watch for birds in their most active period; back to the boat about 8:00 for a full breakfast; second excursion about 10:30, usually on shore and involving some walking; cold buffet lunch around noon; siesta time if you wish, or journal-writing, or sitting on deck chatting and watching for wildlife as we motor to the next area to visit; afternoon outing around 4:00, either in the canoes again or perhaps a visit to a shoreline community; snack and cocktail hour on board as we compare notes and check off the birds

and animals we have seen that day; hot and cold buffet dinner about 6:30; evening excursion in the canoes with powerful flashlights to look for nocturnal bird and animal life or a presentation by one of our guides; bedtime for most of us about 9:00. Full days, yes, but one can always opt to skip an outing and stay on board. We have two outstanding local guides with us; one grew up along the river in one of the tiny villages, is basically self-taught, but knows every aspect of river life; the other is a “town” boy with more formal education. Both are amazing in the depth of their knowledge of birds, animals and plants, their awareness of environmental concerns, their love of the rainforest, and their excellent English. They also complement one another fully; most of us try to alternate whose canoe we will be in each day, as with one we will get more detailed information and more scientific data, while the other might do some daredevil thing like grab a baby caiman from the water, or tell us about the folklore as he learned it from his parents and grandparents. And both will amaze us with their birdcalls; they sometimes fool each other into looking for a bird that isn’t there. There are very few times when anyone decides to stay back, no matter how tired we think we are.

The *m.v. Tucano* is a modern reproduction of an old-time riverboat, with ample use of teak and other local hardwoods. The engines are modern, the crew fully-qualified. The cabins and dining saloon have individual air-condition-

foods and consider the variety of local offerings a bonus. The breakfast buffet always includes cold meats and cheese, a cooked cereal as well as cold, eggs sometimes, and a variety of fruits. Coffee is served with meals, and hot water is always at hand to make instant coffee or a selection of teas, regular and herbal, any time of day. Cold bottled water is available on both deck levels, and an assortment of juices in the dining saloon. There is a small fridge with cold canned soft drinks and beer, also a wine cupboard with Brazilian and Chilean wines; these are all for purchase at a reasonable price on an honour system – check off what you take against your name, label your bottle, and settle the bill at the end of the trip. One of the evenings that we do not go back out in the canoes, our guides show us the various fruits and vegetables that are grown locally or that grow wild in the forest and tell us about their uses. The other evening, the guide who grew up on the river tells us some of the legends of the river; particularly interesting are the legends of the pink dolphins, which we do see several times.

We travel about 300 km up the Rio Negro as far as the Rio Branco, not quite reaching the Equator. For the return trip, our excursions are on the other side of the river where we notice some differences in vegetation and wildlife. One morning, we fish for piranha, catching enough that we can all have a taste later. One afternoon, a few adventurous souls do get into the water at one of the beaches, although

The other might do some daredevil thing like grab a baby caiman from the water.


ing controls. There is hot water for showers three times a day, first thing in the morning, and after the morning and afternoon excursions. Towels are changed daily, bedding every three days. Cabins are made up each morning while we are on our first outing. One afternoon near the end of our trip we have the opportunity to visit the shipyards where the *Tucano* was built. While most crew members do not speak English, they are all polite, friendly and eager to help; learn a few words of Portuguese and they will be delighted. The young men who sometimes operate the outboard motors are almost as good as the guides at spotting wildlife. There is always someone to help us in and out of the canoe, to remind us to take our seat cushions and wear our lifejackets. After a shore visit, someone will hose down our boots. Our cooks are a husband-and-wife team who operate out of a tiny kitchen. They purchase fresh fish from local fishermen almost every day for our evening meal, and local fruits and vegetables from the villagers. The first couple of days we have fresh meat that has been brought on board from Manaus; later, meat is pre-packaged only. We get a new dessert every day, usually a pudding or (soft) ice cream made from one of the palms or fruits or nuts we have seen in the forest. There is always a selection of cold raw and cooked vegetables, but not lettuce-based salads as we know them. People in our group are very willing to try different

one can hardly say that they “swam”. We visit the ruins of an old rubber plantation. After six days of seeing no other tourists, we are back within day-trip distance of Manaus, and so see several other riverboats, particularly on Lago Januari with its Ecological Park, its caiman pool, its water lilies the size of dinner plates and lily pads two meters across. Our final day on the water, we motor along the line of the confluence of the waters, where the dark waters of the Rio Negro, originating high in the Venezuelan Andes, are clearly distinguishable for several miles from the lighter sediment-filled waters of the many other tributaries that have come from the distant Peruvian and Bolivian Andes across the plains to form what is officially named the Amazon from this point.

After one last night on board back at our starting point, we head off by bus for central Manaus to visit the morning open-air fish and vegetable market, do a bit of souvenir-shopping, then a tour of the renowned Manaus Opera House which was built around the turn of the last century when Manaus was the rubber-producing capital of the world. Apart from a few simple hand-crafted items in the villages, this is the only opportunity to spend money! Back to the boat for a last lunch, then most head off to the airport for the return flights home. Because we flew with frequent flyer points, we arrived a day earlier and left three days later than

the group flight. We were quite happy to arrive early as we had ample time to enjoy the luxurious Hotel Tropical with its sumptuous breakfast buffet, pool, mini-zoo (with a good selection of birds and mammals in large cages) and gardens while recovering from a long overnight flight. By staying on afterwards, we were also able to visit the Municipal Zoo (which is operated by the military and whose vast jungle interior is used to train soldiers from around the world in jungle survival). Here we saw several of the larger cats (jaguar, black leopard, ocelot and more), other birds, monkeys and snakes that we did not see in the wild; the cat display area was superb.

“The Amazon Rainforest of Brazil” is offered each February-March by Quest Nature Tours of Toronto. Call 416-633-5666 or 1-800-387-1483, or go online to www.worldwidequest.com for information about their nature trips. It was our first tour with this company, but several of the group had gone on many Quest tours and had nothing but praise for the tour offerings. Most of their trips, including this one, are limited to about 16 participants; we were 13, plus the tour leader, a wildlife biologist who is retired from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource. Your local library will likely have guides to Brazil from publishers such as Lonely Planet and Fodors; look also for a book of South American birds and animals with coloured plates. There are several on board for consultation, but it is nice to have a look beforehand at what you might see. Do take good binoculars with you as this is the only way to see many of the birds and animals clearly, the greater the magnification the better. Photographers must also realize that, other than general scenery, most of the animals and birds will be quite a distance away. Light is limited in the rainforest as well, so you will not only want some high-powered lenses (an extensive zoom lens will be an advantage), but also high-speed film or a digital camera that will adjust to low light. Our tour in February 2006 was eleven days from Manaus (plus two travel days), but we notice an extension in the new catalogue for 2007: one day less on the river, then a three-day land-trip by van to the rainforest town of President Figueirado and an eco-lodge stay for visits to research cen-

tres and wildlife reserves. The *Tucano* has one large cabin with a double bed plus a single on the top deck, and eight other cabins on the two other decks which have either bunks or twin beds. All have private facilities. In 2007, the price range is US\$3395-3695, exclusive of flights. Air Canada flies overnight to Sao Paulo, then a Brazilian airline to Manaus. An overnight at the Hotel Tropical in Manaus with buffet dinner and breakfast is included at the beginning of the trip, as are all meals on board the *Tucano*, and all tips for the guides and crew. We did collect money to buy a new soccer ball and some basic school supplies for the children of the two villages we visited. Extra nights at the Hotel Tropical are about US\$100, including breakfast. A visa is required to visit Brazil; be sure to read the requirements carefully, as they will reject the application if you do not include your flight itinerary. There is a 2-hour time difference between Ontario and Sao Paulo, a 1-hour difference for Manaus. Brazilian law requires that you clear your own luggage through customs at the point of arrival, even if it has been tagged through to Manaus. We can highly recommend this trip; however, a spirit of adventure is required. You must, of course, be interested in wildlife, and you must realize that while you will see a lot, you will likely come home with far fewer photos than you are accustomed to taking. You must not expect that your meals will be of the quality and assortment available at home, in Europe, or on a cruise ship; part of the experience is tasting local foods, appreciating the vast variety that the rainforest offers, the versatility of cooks whose equipment is what we would consider basic camping gear and who cannot pop out to the store to pick up anything during the entire trip. You’ve read and seen movies about the vast Amazonian jungle all your life; you know about the devastating deforestation of the rainforest that is occurring in our own time. While there is no clear-cutting taking place in this immediate area, our guides pointed out to us that each year, in Brazil, an area equal to that of Belgium is clear-cut. Go and experience the rainforest while it is still there for us; take in your tourism dollars with the prayer that they will help to save more of this gem that is one of the greatest natural treasures on Earth. 


... continued from page 15

that we had waterproof clothing when we went in a Zodiac among the icebergs to the base of the Piloto and Nena glaciers. We also had a good view of other glaciers from the ship.

On the last morning, the ship went on a little beyond Punta Arenas to stop at Magdalena Island in the Strait of Magellan, the home of a large colony of Magellanic penguins. Although many of the penguins had already moved northward for the winter, there were many still there moulting. There is a good view from the lighthouse on the island. It is also possible to visit Magdalena Island on a day trip from Punta Arenas. We docked at Punta Arenas, Chile, late on Saturday morning and the ship left again at six for Ushuaia.

We had a couple of short periods of rough water but

experienced no problems with seasickness. It is very windy in Patagonia so be sure to have a hat, gloves and a windproof jacket, even in summer— and remember ... keep your glasses well secured! We thoroughly enjoyed this short cruise that allowed us to visit penguins, icebergs and glaciers, all without crossing the Drake Passage to the Antarctic peninsula.

We see that the price for our class of cabin in late March and April next year (low season) is US\$960 pp. For full information on *Cruceros Australis* visit www.australis.com. And if you enter “Mare Australis” in Google you’ll find other interesting sites of travel agencies that market the cruise. We highly recommend this short but interesting cruise. It’s a great addition to a trip to the bottom of the South American continent. 

BELIZE

Back in 2000 I enjoyed a tour of Belize and wrote about it in TS in November of that year. During my trip I had visited one of the Mayan villages in the Toledo district that were in the process of launching a Maya Guesthouse programme. The sleeping accommodation for visitors was not quite ready, so I did not stay there, but I thoroughly enjoyed my few hours with the villagers, being shown their small farm, their animals, their arts and crafts and watching (helping?) the women cook dinner which I later shared with them: a fragrant chicken and vegetable stew with freshly-made tortillas. It was, therefore, with great pleasure that I've just read an article in the newsletter of the Belize Tourist Board giving news of this programme. Obviously it took off and is still active. If you'd be interested in making this experience part of your Belize adventure: to wake in your rustic accommodation to the sounds of the forest, to learn more about an ancient civilization, to hike to caves that contain ancient Mayan paintings, to visit the region's Mayan temples and ceremonial centres and to immerse yourself in their way of life today, e-mail the Toledo Ecotourism Association (TEA) at tea@btl.net or call [011 501] 722 2096. Visits can be tailor-made to your time and interest, from an afternoon to a 3-night stay. Lodging and three meals a day costs about US\$22 per person, per night. And for general information on Belize you can contact their tourist office in New York at 212 286 9339 or visit www.travelbelize.org.

BRITAIN

A tour which uses B&B's, or 'homestays' as this company calls them, are available in Britain through a travel company called – as you might expect – Homestay Tours. Offered are six- or 12-night trips from London to such places as Windsor, Winchester, Salisbury, Stonehenge, the Eden Project, Bath, Stratford-upon-Avon with all tours starting in London. Tours can be undertaken individually or with a small group. Small-coach transportation takes participants from place to place or you can choose to self-drive or use a train pass. Admission to all attractions is included. Accommodation is with a variety of hosts whose homes vary from luxurious to cottages to working farms; breakfasts are included, of course, as well as dinner, either in your hosts' home or out with them. More information at www.homestaytours.com or call [011 44] 1253 728 830.

FRANCE

We've mentioned this company in connection with London in the past, but now Coach House Rentals is offering a variety of apartment homes in the centre of Paris. If the indoor attractions of the city are what lure you, why not travel there in the winter? These homes – most offered because their owners are away – have a five-night minimum stay requirement (instead of the week often required in accommodation rentals). For details of these (and the properties in London), telephone the English-speaking staff in London at [011 44]

2087 721 939 or visit www.rentals.chsparis.com. On the website some properties look more stylish than others. The places that sleep two look pretty basic, but some of the larger ones – suitable for a family or group travelling together – look very nice. So ... get a few friends together and explore the City of Light this winter.

ROMANIA

Does an unusual European experience next year appeal? Then plan to visit the ancient city of Sibiu in the Transylvania region of Romania. The reason? Sibiu has been selected, in partnership with Luxembourg, as the European Capital of Culture for 2007 just as Romania prepares to join the European Union. Sibiu has long seen itself as a city of art and culture and hopes that UNESCO will declare its historic centre a World Heritage Site during the 2007 festivities. The city is said to have fine architecture, museums and art galleries; an orchestra and classical and modern drama including puppet shows, mime and non-conventional theatrical presentations. One of its 18th century governors amassed an art collection, now on display in the Brukenthal Museum, that includes works by Rubens, Botticelli, Titian and Van Dyck. The region also boasts one of Europe's largest open-air museums – the Astra Museum of Traditional Folk Civilization – home to hundreds of reconstructed homes and buildings assembled from all over Romania. This venue, set in over 100 acres of forest and parkland around a lake, will be a major venue for the 2007 celebrations, which number 200 major and many smaller events. And from its website – www.romaniatourism.com/sibiu.html – it appears to have a good tourism infrastructure. Flights are available via Bucharest or directly from Munich and Stuttgart and Brescia (Italy), and it is expected that low-fare operators such as easyJet and Ryanair will add the destination to their routes next year. If you go, we'd love to hear about it.

U.S.A.

- A few months ago a TTS member – Ray Sanford – sent us some details of a new B&B/self-catering property on the Big Island of **Hawaii**. The website wasn't quite finished, but now it is and we'd like to draw your attention to it. Apparently owner Erin is Ray Sanford's god-daughter who, with her husband Ken, recently moved to Hawaii from Washington State. The accommodation at Luana Inn is comprised of five suites with prices ranging from US\$150 to \$200. Visit www.luanainn.com or call 1 877 841 8120.
- Thinking of taking young people (or just yourselves) to **Florida's** SeaWorld (Orlando) and/or Busch Gardens (Tampa Bay). If so, you'll want to know about the Canadian Access Pass for flexible admission, shuttles and add-on dining specials. Passes are available at www.seaworld.ca or www.buschgardens.ca or through CAA or your travel agency. Sounds as though there are some wonderful animal encounters awaiting children at SeaWorld.

* **Air Canada Vacations** newest *Sun Dreambook* brochure is now available at your travel agency. According to officials, the 270-page Dreambook is ACV's biggest Sun brochure ever. It features a Dream Planner fold-out, sample day trips, at-a-glance directories for flights and hotels, destination reviews by Fodor's Travel Guides, and visual rating grids for hotels. The Dreambook is available in five editions — two National versions (one featuring Toronto departures, the other includes a Halifax price insert), two Montreal versions (English and French) and a Western version (featuring departures from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg). Pricing is valid for travel between November 2006 and October 2007.

* **Signature Vacations** has lowered the price of the Premier Service package. Previously priced at \$99.00, the premier service package can now be purchased for the greatly reduced price of \$59.00. Passengers who purchase the Premier Service package at the new lower cost will receive the following upgrades: free advance seat selection (a \$30 value), excess baggage allowance, priority

check-in and later airport check-in on outbound flights, priority boarding, US\$15 per adult tour excursion credit, two free drinks, a free headset, a \$10 credit for onboard duty free shopping, and \$100 discount towards their next Signature Vacations package.

* Brochures detailing winter getaways (resorts and cruises) offered by **Transat Holidays** and **Nolitours** are with your travel agent now. These two brands are, in fact, one company, with Transat offering traditional Caribbean destinations (Cuba, DR, Jamaica, Mexico, St. Lucia and St. Martin) in 4- or 5-star resorts (many of them exclusive to the company) and Nolitours offering more adventurous packages in destinations such as Honduras, El Salvador, Cuba, DR and Costa Rica in 3½- and 4-star properties. Flights will be on Air Transat or WestJet, with AT's Club Class available and seats can be pre-selected on line. The vacations themselves, however, should be booked through a travel agent as they cannot be reserved on the company's websites, although the packages may be offered on some discount websites such as www.exit.ca

airline news

* Are you a frequent air traveller within and/or to the US? See if **Air Canada's** new 'Tango Plus' will save you money. This new pass is valid for 10 or 20 prepaid, one-way trips starting at \$189 anywhere Air Canada, Jazz and their regional partners fly within Canada and the continental United States. Go to www.aircanada.com's Flight Pass section and select the zone of destinations in which you wish to travel. Tango Plus pricing offers 100 per cent Air Canada Status Miles, complimentary advance seat selection, booking changes for a \$40 flat fee any time, same-day changes at the airport for a \$50, and upgrades using eligible Air Canada top-tier upgrade certificates.

* **Air Transat** is adding a second weekly flight to Paris from Québec City this coming winter. The twice-weekly flights will take off from 19 December through to 30 March. Air Transat is the only airline in Canada to offer direct flights from Québec to the French capital. www.airtransat.com

* Web-based, low-cost British carrier **flyglobespan** is launching three flights a day from Hamilton, Ontario to London, Manchester and Glasgow. **flyglobespan** will offer

the following introductory fares: economy \$259 one way, premium \$329 one way, business \$449 one way. Bookings from Ontario will be available in early October. www.flyglobespan.com

* **WestJet** has launched a new desktop application tool, called Get Set, designed to bring instantaneous WestJet offers and deals from the carrier's partners directly to computers. Get Set gives agents and guests access to flight offers based on travel preferences, and allows travellers to customize the information they want to receive. "Our guests have many travel options and busy schedules. Get Set lets our guests know when we've found a match for their travel preferences and brings the best WestJet deals and partner specials directly to them," says Dave Jones, WestJet's director of E-business. In addition, the Get Set application provides quick and easy access to popular WestJet travel tools like Web check-in, Flight Reminders, Flight Tracker and flight schedules. Travellers can start planning their next trip by clicking the "Download" button at www.westjet.com/getset.

Shongololo Express - Namibia

Were you fascinated by the account of the trip through Namibia on the Shongololo Express in last month's issue of *The Travel Society Magazine*? If so, please call us as we are organizing a group to participate in this journey. Our

departure date will be 25 March 2007 and the trip will be for 20 days. By the time you receive this edition we will have all the details, so please give us a call and we will send you the full itinerary with pricing.

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

Small Ship

Galapagos Islands Cruise & Ecuador

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

14 days departing 2 November & 7 December 2006, 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: 6 November; 1 December 2006 & 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

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**

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

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

*No charge
 London stopover*

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 nightclub. 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-Too 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.

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

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**

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**

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

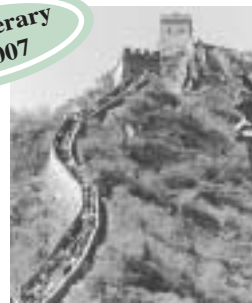
China... Yangtze Spectacular

New itinerary for 2007

\$4,145 FOR 18 DAYS! Departing: 4 April & 26 September 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 \$544

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.



The Grand Tour of Asia

Departing: 2 April 2007

A cruising tour of Japan, China and Hong Kong

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 she takes you

from Kyoto to Nagasaki, Pusan, Dalian and Taipei 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.

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

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

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