



OUTLINES NEWSLETTER

February / March 2011

"Not all those who wander are lost" – J. R. R. Tolkien

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Walking in France – the Dordogne Quercy**
- **New walking base in Wales for Snowdonia**
- **Australian Alps gourmet walking weekend in Victoria**
- **News & offers: Walking & cruising in Burgundy, Gourmet cooking & wine cruise in Provence**
- **Beautiful Boating Holiday discount offers**
- **Bike & Barge cycling cruises: What's new, what's still available in 2011?**
- **General Travel News: Italy (Opera at Verona, the Palio), Belgium, France**
- **What's NEW on our website for 2011?**
- **What you said about our holidays**
- **Airfare bargains to Europe & around the world**
- **Where in the world is – our guide to routes, maps & finding places?**
- **Outdoor Travel brochure request form**
- **Our suggestions to help the environment**

For those receiving this newsletter for the first time, welcome. If you are interested in past copies they are stored on our website <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au> under 'What's New'.

WALKING THE DORDOGNE QUERCY IN FRANCE



One of the great sites to see in the Dordogne, this wonderful part of France seeped in history and from where Europe grew 25,000 years ago, is the cave of Lascaux at the north end of the Vézère valley, a valley much the same as it was all those thousands of years ago. The river would have been much bigger then but that is all. Therefore when walking along the tiny road that meanders through trees and along the river bank now dotted with pretty chateaux, one gets an immense feeling of history and of continuity. This is where our European roots came from (of course our real roots came from Africa in the Rift Valley) but once humans arrived in the great second wave of the Homo sapiens exodus, this is where we thrived and began to think and began to create. This is a thinking persons valley!

About 130 caves have been found along the banks of the river but by far the most important and most stunning is that of Lascaux just outside the pretty village of Montignac. Lascaux was discovered in 1940 by two boys who had plenty of '*sang froid*' and went down a hole trying to find their dog. They found the dog and the extraordinary single 200-metre cave of paintings. This was to be their secret forever.....

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

.....their secret lasted just a couple of days! The caves were opened in 1948 and rapidly became one of the great wonders of the world with over 1000 visitors a day. What was not realised though was that this human invasion would totally upset the biodiversity of the cave and soon fungus was growing rapidly over these Palaeolithic paintings. The cave was closed. An equally spectacular exact copy (down to the last square centimetre) was made a few hundred yards from the original cave and this is what is now visited every year.

It is totally awe-inspiring to walk into a cave to see how we as humans were thinking 17,000 years ago. The paintings came before the written word. The Sistine Chapel of the pre-historic world. You see the total mastery of the artist in drawing bulls 5 metres in length with a line of absolute perfection and wonderful intensity. The use of perspective is extraordinary and not to be seen again until the 15th century. But all this beauty ... why?



Like Stonehenge in England there is much consternation as to the reasons for their creation. To the general viewer it would first appear to be a hunting scene, a sort of shaman, almost voodooist idea of the conquest of man over beast. This is not so though and there are many reasons to make us think further. For instance horses and bulls are depicted and not reindeer which were the principle food source and which were in abundance in the Vézère Valley. One idea is that this was an ancient star chart showing constellations of the pre-historic skies. The cave entrance would have been much lower originally and therefore lined perfectly with the summer solstice. This would link the caves to the idea of Stonehenge.

This is all enthralling and the start of a wonderful week of walking, good food, good wine, wonderful accommodation and an expert and passionate tour guide in southwest France.

Spring and early summer is a fantastic time to be in this area. The flowers are abundant and you can see some 30 different species of orchid, these wonderfully majestic flowers that have evolved so intricately to trick an insect into thinking the flowers are in fact insects. By allowing the insect to think that the flower may be a mate it helps pollination and more orchids can be produced. What a marvel of nature.

As well as spectacular flowers you spend three nights in the beautiful Manoir d'Hautegente under lofty trees on the banks of the tiny meandering river Coly. Pack animals walk along with you in the Quercy, the tranquil and beautiful region just south of the Dordogne. This alleviates the burden of carrying things. The donkeys also carry water, homemade biscuits and a delicious alcohol called '*pineau*' which is a smart concoction of grape juice and Cognac. Finishing with four nights at the wonderful Hostellerie du Vert with the sophisticated cooking of Bernard Philippe is always a highlight of all our French trips. For more information call **1800 331 582** or see: http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/sme/outdoortravel/content/whats_new_holiday#france

NEW WALKING DESTINATION: SNOWDONIA IN WALES



We are pleased to announce the purchase of Dolserau Hall Country House in Southern Snowdonia. The Country House is set in superb gardens of five acres just outside Dolgellau.

Dolserau Hall offers high quality accommodation with twenty well-appointed en-suite bedrooms. The House has a reputation for fabulous food and has been awarded an AA rosette for its high quality dining.

With unrivalled views of Cadair Idris, there are excellent mountain walks from the doorstep, while the coast is only ten miles away.

Ask about our country-house Guided Walks in many centres across England, Scotland & Wales. Centre-based walks are available in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Croatia, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia & Norway

AUSTRALIAN GOURMET WALKING WEEKEND

Guided walking at Dinner Plain Alpine Village, NE Victoria

Departs: 25th – 27th March 2011

Cost: **\$625** per person

Getting ready for a walking holiday in Europe – then come to our back-yard, invigorate your senses with a weekend of classic mountain trails combined with indulgent and gourmet experiences in the Victorian High Country near Bright.

Stay two nights in four-star luxury at Rundells Alpine lodge. Rekindle the romance of the legendary High Country cattlemen. Hike the iconic Razorback Ridge to Mount Feathertop. Enjoy gourmet food and wines at Graze restaurant and relax and unwind in Dinner Plain Alpine village.

Friday 25th March

Drive the stunning Great Alpine Road to Dinner Plain Alpine Village in the heart of the Victorian Alps at 1520m. Settle in to your comfortable room at Rundells Alpine Lodge. Wind down in the cosy lounge bar and enjoy a two-course à la Carte dinner.

Saturday 26th March

Indulge in a delicious breakfast at Rundells before we drive to Mount Hotham (depart 8am) from where we walk the breathtaking Razorback Ridge to Mount Feathertop, the second highest mountain in Victoria at 1922m. Enjoy fabulous unbroken views across the High Country. Relax with a delicious gourmet picnic – which we hike in for you - showcasing the wonderful regional produce. After lunch we continue on foot and descend to the pretty village of Harrietville in the Ovens valley. (21km).

Transfer back at Dinner Plain. Dinner is a fabulous five-course dégustation menu at Rundells Alpine Lodge.

Sunday 27th March

Depart 10am. After a leisurely start to the day we enjoy a guided walk through snow gums and alpine ash to the stunning lookout at Precipice Plain. Hear the amazing stories of the earlier travellers in this region and imagine the lives of the former cattlemen. Picnic amongst the trees before continuing to a pretty lake near Cobungra from where we drive you back to Rundells. (12km)

Tour includes:

- 2 night's quality accommodation in twin or king room
- Cooked to order and continental breakfast daily
- 5-course regional dégustation dinner in Graze restaurant matched to local wines
- 2-course à la carte dinner in Rundells lounge bar
- 2 guided walks (including transport to/from Rundells) with 2 gourmet picnic lunches with local wines

LA BELLE EPOQUE - **WALKING** CRUISE IN BURGUNDY FRANCE



From: Tanlay to Vanarey Les Laumes
Departs: 16th - 22nd October 2011 & 23rd - 29th October 2011
Cost: From just **\$4840** per person twin share (value season)

What a wonderful concept, a moving hotel with a very special chef and crew, comfortable cabins with ensuite bathrooms, a small group of like-minded folk & an expert walking guide to take you on a combination of interesting visits and tranquil rural walks in beautiful French countryside:

Suggested itinerary:

Sunday Montbard to Tanlay

We rendezvous at Montbard and transfer to the barge moored in Tanlay, in a private air-conditioned minibus. A full crew Welcome Aboard with champagne and canapés during which we hear about the week's itinerary, its walks and its activities. After time to settle into your cabin we gather for our Welcome Dinner on board which is a wonderful introduction to Burgundy's excellent cuisine.

Monday Tanlay to Lezine

After a delicious breakfast, which includes fresh croissants from a local Boulangerie we walk to the 16th Century Renaissance style Chateau de Tanlay for a guided tour of this beautiful house. Returning to the barge we are transferred a short distance by van for our first countryside walk. This takes us through farmland and then the glorious Tonnerois vineyards, in October ablaze with hues of gold, yellow and orange. After lunch we drive into the centre of Tonnerre for a short tour of this historic and fascinating town. We see the amazing Fosse Dionne and the 13th century Hotel Dieu. Back on board, our cruise takes us to Lezine.

Tuesday Lezine to Ancy le Franc

We start the day with a canal-side walk passing ancient villages before we depart for the world famous town and vineyards of Chablis. After a gourmet lunch in Chablis we see some of the sites before we enjoy a private wine tasting at the Domaine Servan, renowned for its Premier and Grand Cru wines popularised by Alex Lichine in the 1950s. There is time to wander round the town before we return to the barge at Ancy le Franc.

Wednesday, Day 4 Ancy le Franc to Ravières

A morning visit to Noyers sur Serein, listed as one of the most beautiful villages in France to enjoy the vegetables, cheeses, colours and delights of the local market. We are then guided around the medieval streets and ramparts before returning to the barge for lunch. In the afternoon we either enjoy a lazy cruise gently down to Ravières or walk there by a circuitous route through the Burgundian countryside. We start this in the ancient village of Chassignelles where we visit its historic 12th century church to see some of the best-preserved wall paintings in Burgundy.

Thursday, Day 5 Ravières to Montbard

Starting at the tiny village of Cry, this morning's walk takes us through a cacophony of woodland, rolling fields, forest and a ruined castle. In the afternoon we drive to the exquisite World Heritage UNESCO site of Abbey de Fontenay founded by St Bernard in 1118. Not only is it a wonderful example of early Cistercian architecture but it is virtually intact. With its peaceful gardens and ponds and fascinating cloisters, dormitories and scriptorium, Fontenay gives an exceptional glimpse of early Cistercian life and industry. Before dinner there is time to stroll round the ancient centre of Montbard.

Friday, Day 6 Montbard to Venarey les Laumes

After climbing out of the valley our final walk takes us past fields of Charollais cattle and through the hamlet of Benoisey before reaching Grignan where we descend to meet the barge. En route we have the best views of the week with stunning vistas across the valley of the Brenne and the Canal du Bourgogne. In the afternoon we first visit the fascinating walled hilltop village of Flavigny sur Ozerain, where the film Chocolat was made. We then visit Alesia, the site of the final battle between the Gauls and Romans that took place in 52 BC, and finally the fortified town of Semur en Auxois before returning to the barge moored at Venarey les Laumes for the Captain's Farewell Dinner.

Saturday, Day 7 Venarey les Laumes to Paris

After breakfast, disembark and transfer to Montbard TGV station or centre by 11am.

On alternate weeks the cruise is in the reverse direction. This is a sample itinerary and is subject to change.

Just two departures scheduled for 2011 on this barging and walking cruise – read what was said about this walking holiday cruise in 2010:

I had two personal concerns before this walk. Firstly, as a single person accustomed to living alone, would I feel the need to 'escape' from the barge and my fellow passengers? I can honestly say that this thought did not cross my mind at all during the whole week. Far from being a challenge, the mix of cultures in our group (Canadian, American, Australian and English) added to the interest of the trip and the mix of visits, walks and fine dining kept me occupied but not at the expense of relaxation. Secondly, being on the most susceptible end of the motion-sickness scale, would I suffer any effects of the barge's movement? Not at all – I felt as stable as on dry land. In fact, being surrounded by water had a truly therapeutic effect.

On arrival, our travel-weariness quickly dissolved thanks to the beaming smiles of the crew who welcomed us aboard, handing us a glass of champagne and a selection of delicious canapés. After our various introductions, we had just one instruction from our Captain, Stephane: "Start enjoying yourself straight away as the week will go by very quickly." So we did, and he was right!

On first seeing La Belle Epoque, I was instantly struck by the size of the vessel. It appeared much bigger than in the photos I'd seen and very impressive with its crisp blue and white paintwork. The interior décor is dominated by traditional wood paneling and there is space for everyone to sit comfortably in the interior lounge or outside on the sundeck. The cabins are cosy and have everything you need for a very comfortable week. They have windows or portholes encased in that lovely old heavy brass which you just don't see nowadays. The housekeeping team worked very hard at their role, discreetly cleaning and tidying the cabins and providing fresh towels every day. And the bathrobe and slippers are especially handy for keeping your modesty when walking up to the hot tub on deck!

Not considering myself a food buff, I wasn't sure if the gourmet meals would be as important to me as to others. How wrong I was. The delicate flavours, imaginative food combinations and beautiful presentation by our chef, Emma, were a delight. Served with seamless efficiency by Kayleigh and Lindsay, each lunch and dinner was accompanied by appropriate red and white wines for us to enjoy and compare, expertly described by our Captain. And, in true French style, we had a different selection of cheeses at every meal, dutifully described by Lindsay. It didn't take long for dinner to become a highlight of our day. And after one of our slightly longer afternoon guided walks, we laughed as we noticed that everyone had arrived especially early for dinner, perched on the edge of our seats and casting hopeful glances at the kitchen door.

The gentle chug of the engine is more comforting than intrusive. With locks occurring every 20 minutes to one hour (40 locks in 5 days), the Captain and his effervescent First Mate, Rudy, are kept very busy. Far from becoming repetitive, this process remained as fascinating for me at the end of the week as it did at the start. Each lock has its own little keeper's house, complete with name and number plaque above the front door and a friendly dog eager to greet the barge. The gardens have their own individual style and one features a selection of bizarre follies, including a huge giraffe! The lock offers an opportunity for guests to hop off for a towpath walk or cycle ride, or to step back on board for a coffee or to just sit and enjoy the cruise.

On most autumn mornings, the mist hangs heavily over the water. It's beautiful. Stepping outside, you need to be wrapped up warmly while the mist lingers but it becomes surprisingly warm if the sun burns through. One of my fellow passengers commented as we strolled along the towpath "There is something very pleasant about having your hotel bedroom gliding along the river beside you." As well as the option to walk along the canal towpath, there is no doubt that having the experienced walk guide, brought an additional dimension to the trip. He led us on a two to three hour leisurely walk into the surrounding countryside each morning or afternoon. The walks were not fast paced or demanding. They were designed to give us time to absorb the views and relish the quietness of our surroundings. We also had regular pauses to hear his anecdotes, bird and wildlife observations and snippets of local history. Under his gentle leadership, we passed through pretty pale limestone villages, saw evidence of wild boar foraging, tasted a grape or two in a fine Chablis vineyard and, on the morning we walked to Les Clefs de Rochefort, this derelict castle was appropriately enshrouded in mist.

Our sightseeing visits were guided by our well-informed and articulate Captain who brought to life the classic French Château de Tanlay and the stunning Abbayé de Fontenay – a 'must-see' if you visit this area. We were surprised to be guided around one of Chablis' leading wineries by a bright young Australian whose extensive knowledge of French wine growing and Australian wine blending belied his youthful looks. He explained the sometimes-complex production methods with remarkable clarity.

If you are considering this type of voyage but haven't done anything like it before, I cannot recommend it highly enough. It's an experience, which will leave you well rested, enriched and smiling at your memories for a long time afterwards. Would I go again? Absolutely!

Let us know if we can book a cabin for you?

SAVE \$900 ON A WINE & COOKING RIVER CRUISE IN FRANCE

From the Southern Rhone Valley through the Camargue to Languedoc



Departs: 15th – 21st May 2011

Cost: Reduced from AU\$5285 per person twin share to just **AU\$4395** per person – limited space

Suggested itinerary...

Sunday, Avignon

Transfer to Le Phénicien moored close to the city of Avignon's ramparts. It is time to settle in and enjoy a welcome glass of Champagne. Our first dinner on board sets the tone on both cuisine and wines served during the trip. Welcome aboard!

Monday, Avignon to Villeneuve lès Avignon

While the most keen on learning the secrets of our French Chefs will have a private hands-on cooking class at the 4-star hotel restaurant La Mirande, the others will enjoy strolling around in the Pope's Palace. Everybody is invited to join the students at La Mirande for lunch and taste the results of the morning lessons! Then the bus will take us to the Domaine Beaurenard in Châteauneuf-du-Pape where we have a guided wine tasting. Le Phénicien docked nearby and we cruise to Villeneuve lès Avignon where we will stay overnight.

Tuesday, Villeneuve lès Avignon to Vallabrègues

This morning we will visit Le Domaine de La Mordorée in Tavel where we will taste some AOC Lirac and the famous Tavel rosé, certainly one of the best rosés of France enjoyed, as legend has it, by Emperor Julius Cesar himself. After this heady visit we get back to the barge and sail down to Vallabrègues a quiet and charming little port where it is good to rest, have a bike ride or play the *pétanque* under the plane trees.

Wednesday, Vallabrègues to Arles

A second cooking class this morning at the Domaine de Valmouriane in the valley of Les Baux de Provence. We start at the most important local market of Provence in the famous city of Saint Remy de Provence; the chef of Valmouriane will be our guide. We all lunch at Valmouriane and evaluate the progress of our cooking students! This afternoon we visit the Mas du Gourgonnier featuring brilliant AOC Baux de Provence wines.

Back to the barge we pass through the huge lock of Beaucaire and sail down to Arles, the city of Roman history and of impressionist painters such as Van Gogh, a true open-air museum of Provence.

Thursday, Arles to Gallician

This morning we will visit Le Chateau Mourgues du Grés, appellation Costières de Nîmes. The rosé wine from this winery is the favorite of the famous wine advocate Parker. Then we cruise through the Camargue along the River Rhône, the Petit Rhône and the canal to reach the quiet and typical village of Gallician.

Friday, Gallician to Aigues-Mortes

For our last day in the area we will visit 'Chateau d'or et de Gueule' - one of the very many excellent wineries of Languedoc - where we will taste a selection of rosé red and white wines. Back on board a relaxing cruise will take us to our final destination Aigues-Mortes. A 14th century walled city port it was from here that the

French St Louis set sail on his Holy Crusades. The Camargue never fails to impress with its wild flocks of pink flamingos, black fighting bulls and famous gray horses. It is here we have our farewell dinner!

Saturday, Aigues-Mortes

The cruise ends after breakfast

Other hotel barge discounts now available (conditions & booking deadlines apply – ask for details):

SPRING CABIN DISCOUNTS ON THE FOLLOWING BARGES

Spring Cabin Discounts – for bookings made by 25th February for travel in 2011

| | | |
|---------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Provence: | Le Phénicien – departing 1 May 2011 | – save \$800 per person |
| Burgundy: | La Belle Epoque – departing 22 May 2011 | – save \$700 per cabin |
| Burgundy: | L'Impressionniste – for departures 1 & 22 May 2011 | – save \$700 per cabin |
| Gascony/Midi: | Rosa departing 29 May 2011 | – save \$700 per cabin |
| England: | River Thames Magna Carta for departures 15 & 29 May 2011 | – save \$700 per cabin |
| Scotland: | Scottish Highlander - for departures 8 & 29 May 2011 | – save \$400 per cabin |
| Venice & Po: | La Bella Vita for departures 15 May & 5 Jun 2011 | – save \$700 per cabin |

We also have added the latest 2011 as a click-on (page-turning) brochure on our website:

<http://view.vcab.com/?vcabid=geaSejajhScnnljg>

BEAUTIFUL BOATING HOLIDAYS - Self-skipped motor cruisers – bases in Europe & the UK

Explore Burgundy or the Loire Nivernais region, taste the wines of Alsace or the exquisite cheeses of Brittany. Cruise the ancient Canal du Midi, The Lot, and Charente or discover the natural history of the Camargue in France. Outdoor Travel offer an extensive fleet of over 1000 self-skipped boats accommodating from 2 - 12 passengers.

Discounts now available for all NEW bookings made before 28th February 2011

Conditions apply – ask for details:

| DEPARTURES | BOATS | DISCOUNT | COUNTRY / REGION |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| June, July & August | All | 10% | France Midi / Camargue Brittany Burgundy Franche Comte Charente Belgium Ireland |
| June and July | All | 10% | Italy England - Norfolk Broads |
| May | All | 15% | All |
| May | All | 20% | Italy & Germany |
| August | All | 10% | France |
| All | Salsa & Caprice | 15% (20% for May) | All |
| March to July | Nautilia, Crusader & Countess | 20% | All |
| August to October | Nautilia, Crusader & Countess | 15% | All |
| May | Capri, Capri TS, Clipper, Royal Classique & Classique | 20% | All |
| May | Minuetto | 10% | Italy |

SPECIAL OFFER: We have an additional offer of 10% off any Midi / Camargue cruise booked for a departure in September 2011. Minimum hire of 7-nights and includes all boats except 5-anchor vessels. This 10% September offer will be valid for all **new** bookings made from before 31st March 2011.

Maximum discount is 15% unless specified for ALL offers and excludes all 5-anchor vessels.

All motor-cruisers are fully equipped with cabins, bathroom/toilets and well-equipped galleys. All boats are easy to handle - tuition given or skippers for hire if required - no experience or boat licence is necessary.

Self-skipped motor cruisers are also available on the Royal River Thames in England, Norfolk Broads, and the Caledonian Canal near Lock Ness in Scotland, the Venice Lagoon in Italy, the River Shannon in Ireland, Friesland in Holland or the Mecklenburg Lakes in Germany.

Outdoor Travel have added a comprehensive website link which now includes an availability check search engine: <http://www.leboat.com.au/> on our fully comprehensive website

New brochure now available – call 1800 331 582 for free copies or email info@outdoortravel.com.au

BIKE & BARGE CRUISES

Guided cycling cruises in Europe

Bike & Barge cruising combines two popular ways of exploring Europe (cycling and river cruising), these tours allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (tours are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR cycling enthusiasts), you unpack once, come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin. Well-maintained multi-geared bikes are provided (you can bring your own if you prefer). The cycling is fascinating and varied with free time at each day's destination.

We have two boats operating every week in season departing Saturdays & Sundays in the Venice Lagoon & to the lakes of Mantova in Italy.

To show how these operate look at this short movie: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-grTeJDaDz4>

CROATIA - NATIONAL PARKS & ISLANDS OF CENTRAL DALMATIA

8-days / 7-nights includes Trogir, Primošten, Šibenik, Zadar, Krka-waterfalls and Kornati Islands

Regular departures from April to October – choice of ships available



Croatia has a beautiful coast with thousands of islands, reefs and bays. Starting from Trogir spend a wonderful relaxing week on a ship cruising between the mainland and the islands and visiting two national parks and the islands of Central Dalmatia. Highlights of this cycling cruise include the UNESCO listed town of Trogir, Primošten, Šibenik with its famous cathedral, Zadar, National Park Krka-waterfalls and the Kornati Islands.

Bike and Boat cruises combines two popular ways of exploring Europe (easy to moderate cycling with island cruising). They allow partners of different abilities and interests to holiday together (trips are just as interesting for non-cycling partners, leisure cyclist OR enthusiasts), you unpack once and come 'home' each night to a wonderful meal and a comfortable cabin with your own bathroom. These cruises are rapidly becoming the thing to do in Europe appealing to the more active mature traveller. They are ideal for first timers or small groups.

Bike and Boat cruises offer the opportunity to explore beautiful countryside and historic cities sampling wine and local produce in the company of like-minded cyclists. Tours are conducted in English but passengers mostly include a mix of different nationalities - including English or German speaking with French, Italian or Dutch as the other main languages - adding to the cultural enjoyment of bike and barge cruising.

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| National Parks of Dalmatia: | Standard cruise: | \$1710 per person (twin share). |
| | Premium cruise: | \$1890 per person (twin share). |
| | Above Deck Cabin supplement: | \$95pp (twin share), \$190 (single) |
| | Single Use Cabin supplement: | \$550 per person |

Depart:

Standard cruise: 11 Jun, 16, 30 Jul, 13, 27 Aug, 10 Sep, 1 Oct 2011

Premium cruise: 7,14,21 May, 4,18 Jun, 2,9,23 Jul, 6,20 Aug, 3 Sep, 8 Oct

Starts & Ends: Port of Trogir - nearest airport is Split & the port is a short taxi ride away

Services included:

- 8-day-trip on a motor yacht with a crew of four
- 7 nights in a double/twin cabin with shower/toilet
- Breakfast, lunch & dinner) - the cook on board prepares the breakfast and two warm meals a day – starting with the lunch on the arrival day and ends with the breakfast on the departure day.
- Bed linen and towels
- English & German speaking tour guide
- Bike hire & 7-guided cycling tours as described in itinerary. Helmets are required on all cycle tours – they are available (reservation requested) but we suggest you bring or buy your own.
- Entrance fees to the National parks & maps of the single cycling trips

BIKE & BARGE - SPACE STILL AVAILABLE FOR 2011:

Due to the overwhelming demand we have very few cabins left on many of our boats for 2011. Here are some available dates that you might like to consider:

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------|
| Italy: | 30 April – 7 May 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Holland: | 8 – 15 May from Amsterdam to the tulip fields | \$1895 |
| Italy: | 21– 28 May 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Italy: | 4 – 11 June 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Croatia: | 11 – 18 June 2011 National Parks from Trogir near Split | \$1710 |
| France: | 11 – 18 June from Aigues-Mortes to Avignon | \$1590 |
| Germany: | 11 – 18 June from Magdeburg (near Berlin) to Bremen | \$2185 |
| Croatia: | 18 – 25 June 2011 National Parks from Trogir near Split | \$1710 |
| France: | 25 June – 2 July from Aigues-Mortes to Avignon | \$1590 |
| France: | 2 – 9 July from Avignon to Aigues-Mortes | \$1590 |
| Italy: | 2 – 9 July 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Germany & France: | 2 – 9 July 2011 from Cochem to Metz | \$1680 |
| Belgium & Holland: | 3 – 10 July 2011 from Bruges to Amsterdam | \$1895 |
| Belgium & Holland: | 23 – 30 July 2011 from Bruges to Amsterdam | \$1560 |
| Holland & Belgium: | 6 – 13 August 2011 from Amsterdam to Bruges | \$1780 |
| France: | 13 – 20 August from Montargis to Paris | \$1780 |
| Germany: | 27 August – 3 September 2011 from Koblenz on the Rhine to Merzig | \$2185 |
| Italy: | 3 – 10 September 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Italy: | 10 – 17 September 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| Croatia: | 17 – 25 September 2011 Southern Dalmatia from Trogir near Split | \$1710 |
| France: | 1 –15 October 2011 from Burgundy to Paris | \$2995 |
| France & Belgium: | 2 – 16 October 2011 from Paris to Bruges | \$3725 |
| Germany & France: | 8 – 15 October 2011 from Mainz to Metz | \$2185 |
| Croatia: | 8 – 15 October 2011 Southern Dalmatia premium from Trogir near Split | \$1890 |
| France & Belgium: | 15 – 29 October 2011 from Paris to Bruges | \$3585 |
| Italy: | 15 – 22 October 2011 the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples | \$2090 |
| France, Belgium & Holland: | 15 October – 2 nd November 2011 from Paris to Amsterdam | \$4455 |
| Belgium & Holland: | 16 – 23 October 2011 from Bruges to Amsterdam | \$1895 |
| Germany & Holland: | 22 – 29 October 2011 from Koblenz to Amsterdam | \$1680 |

New **Bike & Barge** or **Bike & Boat** destinations for 2011 include the Amalfi Coast & Gulf of Naples, Sardinia in Italy, Provence, Normandy & new itineraries in the Loire Valley & from Burgundy to Paris in France, Berlin in Germany, Croatia, Greece, Turkey & the Danube delta in Romania.

For a full list of the itineraries we offer see our website:

http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/sme/outdoortravel/content/whats_new_holiday#top

GENERAL TRAVEL NEWS

ITALY

The Palio Horse Race in Siena, Tuscany: 2nd July & 16th August 2011

The famous Palio horse race dates back to 1310 and takes place twice a year – 2nd July (to commemorate the miracles of the Madonna of Provenzano) and 16th August, (to honour the Assumption of the Virgin) in Piazza del Campo. The race consists of bareback riders making three circuits of the main square. It is over in 90 seconds, but it is preceded by five hours of flag-throwing acrobatics. The Palio is the banner, decorated with an image of the Virgin Mary, which is presented to the winner of the race. The 17 "contrade" or suburbs into which the city is divided compete in the race, wearing their traditional costumes and carrying their emblems. Each "contrada" has a name, a banner and a church of its own.

The actual festival begins with the traditional, picturesque procession. It consists of a parade, in historical costume, of mace-bearers, trumpeters, bandsmen, grooms, and standard-bearers, in addition to characters representing the ancient rulers of the city; the Captain of the People, the "Podestà", the Banner-bearers, the Chief Magistrate, the "Biccherna" Superintendents and others. During the competition the competitors race around the city's shell-shaped central square at breakneck speed surrounded by cheering supporters.

After the race, the winning contrada marches to the church of Santa Maria in Provenzano (or, in August, to the Cathedral) and subsequently the festivities continue throughout the night in the neighbourhood and through the streets of the main part of the city.

There are two basic options for attending the race: you can stand in the Piazza free of charge. This will give you a great opportunity to mix with the locals.

The second option is to purchase tickets for the reserved seating and standing areas. By law, most of the numbered seats must be offered to local residents meaning that there is an extremely limited supply. Tickets are sold directly by the shops around Piazza del Campo.

For further information please visit: <http://www.terresiena.it>

Top ten rural destinations in Italy

The municipalities of the Natural Parks were at the centre of research on rural Italian tourists in 2010, according to a study done specialists in rural holidays.

The top destination is Pescasseroli, in the Province of L'Aquila, followed by Amatrice, in Rieti, the agricultural and food centre of the Gran Sasso and Monti della Laga National Park, Roccaraso, in the Province of L'Aquila. Going down the list we find Cogne in Gran Paradiso; the Bormio in the Stelvio Park; Pietrelcina (Benevento); Pescocostanzo (L'Aquila); Morcone (Benevento); Sperlonga (Latina) as the top coastal destination on the list, and finally Contursi Terme (Salerno).

Now that should send you straight to Google Earth (see 'Where on Earth' at the end of our newsletter)

And news from places you do know about:

Venice and Florence may impose an admission charge on visitors:

One euro per day is the suggested rate and the proposed "tourist ticket" would be a local government tax on tourists entering the cities. Mayor of Venice Giorgio Orsoni supports the proposal, saying the historic city should be able to apply the ticket to its 20-million or so visitors a year.

"I think the time has come for Venice... to be able to decide on its own finances," Orsini said in an issued statement carried by news agency AFP.

Fewer than 60,000 people actually live in Venice, and some residents protest tourist were pushing up prices.

A euro a day is hardly a big fee but it might set a precedent, which could see other historic places in Europe charging an entry fee like central London's traffic congestion charge.

The Verona Opera Festival 2011

The 89th Opera Festival of the Fondazione Arena di Verona will take place this year from 17th June to 3rd September with 6 opera titles and 49 performances. The titles this year include La Traviata, Aida, Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Nabucco, La Bohème and Romeo & Juliet.

The performance dates are as follows:

La Traviata - Giuseppe Verdi

June 17th & 24th, July 2nd, 12th, 16th, 21st, 28th, August 4th & 11th

Aida - Giuseppe Verdi

June 18th, 26th, 30th, July 10th, 13th, 17th, 19th, 24th, 26th, 30th, August 7th, 14th, 28th & 31st, September 3rd

Il Barbiere di Siviglia - Gioachino Rossini

June 25th, July 1st, 8th, 14th, 22nd & 29th

Nabucco - Giuseppe Verdi

July 9th, 15th, 20th, 23rd & 27th, August 5th, 12th, 21st & 25th, September 1st

La Bohème - Giacomo Puccini

August 6th, 13th, 19th, 26th & 30th, September 2nd

Romeo & Juliet - Charles Gounod

August 20th, 24th & 27th

For information on tickets and pricing visit: <http://www.arena.it> or contact the Italian Government Tourist Office for a copy of the **Arena di Verona - 89th Festival 2011** brochure - Tel: 02 92621666, email: sydney@enit.it or see <http://www.italiantourism.com.au>

USING HIGH SPEED RAIL IN EUROPE

BRUSSELS TO ENGLAND, FRANCE, THE NETHERLANDS OR GERMANY

Travel on the Eurostar from Brussels – London from just \$65 per person each way

BRUSSELS – LONDON 1h45

The Eurostar offers fast efficient services 9 times a day from Brussels – London. 1st class passengers enjoy spacious and comfortable reclining seats with generous legroom, a complimentary light meal and beverages served at your seat, while 2nd class passengers enjoy comfortable seats, drinks and snacks are available to purchase from the bar car.

Travel on the Thalys to the cities below from just \$100 per person each way:

BRUSSELS – PARIS 1h25

BRUSSELS – AMSTERDAM 2h44

BRUSSELS – COLOGNE 2h32

The Thalys train, also known as the 'Red Train' offers fast efficient rail services with up to 26 services per day between Brussels and Paris, with no flights between these two cities it is the perfect way for your clients to travel in comfort. 1st class passengers receive reclining and spacious seats with plenty of legroom. Free WIFI connection, a meal and drink served at your seat, while 2nd class passengers enjoy comfortable seats with a variety of food and beverages available for purchase.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations

BRAVE NEW WORLD OF INFORMATION

Some links that may inspire, encourage, disparage, empathise or just make you laugh:

THE CAPITAL OF EUROPE, BELGIUM: <http://www.vimeo.com/15239617>

SEE FRANCE FROM AN AMAZING NEW PERSPECTIVE: <http://www.tubewatcher.tv/182>

STRUGGLING WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAG39jKi0II>

Editor's note: Your feedback on these links would be appreciated

WHERE DO WE RECOMMEND?

For 2011 we have added some very interesting destinations & have appointed some new local operators. Here are a few you might like to consider – click on the links to see the details or see **What's New – New Holiday Ideas** on our website: http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/content/whats_new_holiday

Austria, Germany & Switzerland - Lake Constance 8-day self-guided cycling 2011

Austria - Czech Republic - Vienna to Prague guided & self-guided cycling 2011

Croatia - Dalmatian Coast - one-hotel guided walks 2011

England - Dartmoor one-hotel guided walk 2011

England - Cornwall (St. Ives) one-hotel guided walk 2011

France - Guided cycling Loire, Provence, Dordogne, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Normandy & Pyrenees 2011

France & Spain - 'Premium' small group guided walk - Camino De Santiago 2011

Ireland – Celtic Kerry - small group walking sightseeing & traditional highlights 2011

Italy - Sicily self-guided cycling 2011

Italy - Piedmont one-hotel guided walk 2011

Spain - Andalucia self-guided walk 8 days 2011

Spain - Camino de Estrellas self-guided walk to Finisterre 2011

Switzerland - Mont Blanc - self-guided or escorted walks 2011

UK – Crewed narrowboat hotel barge holidays – includes the Midlands & Llangollen 2011

How do you get to these places? Contact Yvette at the Outdoor Travel Fares Desk at:

fares@outdoortravel.com.au or call (03) 57501 044 for all your air ticket & general travel needs.

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT OUR HOLIDAYS

BIKE & BARGE: Rod and I have just come home from a fantastic trip on the river from Paris to Montargis. Fantastic fellow cyclists, super staff -the chef was sensational all meals just super - Sophie our cabin girl bright and bubbly, our captain and right hand man excellent and multi skilled with his "bag of tricks", our tour guide read maps beautifully and managed to get us all home safe and sound each evening!! We couldn't have hand chosen a better group of people to spend the week with. Our thanks **Margie & Rod**

SELF-SKIPPED BOATING IN FRANCE: I am writing to thank you for all your help in researching and booking the holiday. The staff at Outdoor travel did a terrific job in answering all our questions no matter how trivial they seemed to be. The boat trip was fantastic and the boat Grand Classique catered well for 10 people. The only thing we needed but forgot to take was an Aussie flag!!!

Le Boat's moorings, facilities, staff etc were great. Enjoy your newsletters and hope to book with you again some time in the future. **Leonie**

FREYCINET WALK, TASMANIA: Freycinet was FANTASTIC. It really was an amazing trip. The guides were so enthusiastic and passionate about the area of Freycinet and really looked after us. The walks were different each day. The beaches were magnificent (I swam 3 out of 4 days - freezing but too beautiful to pass up). The lodge is amazing! Food was sensational. I couldn't recommend it highly enough. Thanks for your help with the holiday. **Christine**

TALL SHIP NZ: Wow! I loved it. The voyage had all the elements I hoped. I emphatically did NOT want a P&O cruise. Guess what; I didn't get one. Conditions ranged from moderate to rough with a day becalmed thrown in. There was one storm (thunder, lightning, sails blown flat-aback) and one squall of mean dimensions. The ship, of course, NEVER stopped moving. Creaking, pitching, rolling, decks awash were all part of it. I fell over in the 'head' -surprising; given the measurements I wouldn't have thought there was room

to fall over. My cabin (and everyone else's) leaked water, and dry bunks were at a premium. Food was plain, but plentiful and well cooked. Eating had a sort of lumber camp ambience, if you know what I mean. The ship's company were pleasant, helpful and extraordinarily skilled. Hey, half of them were young women; and most competent they were. I climbed aloft, I steered the ship, I heaved and sweated on myriad ropes, halyards, lines, whatever. I scrubbed down. I kept for'ard look-out.

If it was 19th century seagoing before the mast, I did it, and if I had the money I'd do it again tomorrow.

Thank you for allowing an old man to at last live his boyhood fantasies. **John**

AIRFARE BARGAINS TO EUROPE & AROUND THE WORLD

Outdoor Travel have access to a wide range of airlines and airfares - including Economy, Premium Economy (with more legroom) and Business & First Class fares to all destinations including the UK and Europe, New Zealand, Vietnam, the USA or Canada and more.

Our Fares Desk is your complete travel solution - CALL (03) 57 501044

Yvette, our Senior Retail Consultant can assist with your travel arrangements to make your holiday a most wonderful experience. She has access to accommodation, car hire, rail travel, tours, cruises and lots more to make your itinerary complete.

For those travelling particularly to Europe, early booking airfares are still available at excellent prices. The same is applicable to car hire or leasing and often rail passes too. Mostly you need have your bookings confirmed and paid within a week to get the best bargains. Yvette recommends you ask about these savings and book early - particularly for the busier periods such as May/June & September / October & during school holidays. Here are some example fares:

Melbourne to Paris return travelling economy class in June 2011 with Etihad – from **\$2090** including taxes *

Sydney to Rome return economy class in August 2011 with Singapore Airlines – from **\$2090** including taxes *

* Airfares are subject to change, airline conditions & availability.

Other airlines & destinations in Europe available – call Yvette directly on **(03) 57 501044** or email fares@outdoortravel.com.au with your request and she will then be in contact with you to start making all the required arrangements including travel insurance.

TRAVEL INSURANCE - Please don't forget travel insurance too, this is very important when paying for your holiday especially a long way in advance. We have fully comprehensive travel insurance available – call us or see the SureSave link on our website

To buy **SURESAVE TRAVEL INSURANCE**: <http://www.suresave.net.au/home.php?affid=614>

SMART TRAVELLER – Government travel advisories - all countries see: <http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>

WHERE ON EARTH IS.....?

Internet map & route finders

Looking for a map to get you from A to B then you now have several internet choices on our website:

See the Michelin Guide link on our Active Europe page: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/content/europe>

Go to the <http://www.mappy.com/> website for a host of easy to read options

Go to <http://www.googleearth.com/> for a graphic view of the world we visit walking or cycling

Want help finding you way around Australia see <http://www.travelmate.com.au/> for Travel Mate Mapmaker.

To see all the destinations on our website: http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/content/whats_new_holiday

ORDER OUR TRAVEL BROCHURES FOR 2011

Please tick below & email, fax or post your brochure request & we will send the new brochures to you:

EUROPE

- CAMINO DE SANTIAGO – Walking or cycling the Way of St James (France or Spain)
- GO BARGING – EUROPEAN WATERWAYS – Hotel Barges in France, Germany, UK & Ireland
- BEAUTIFUL BOATING HOLIDAYS - Self-skippered France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Italy, UK
- CASTELLARE DI TONDA – Tuscan farmhouse self-contained apartments
- NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIA, VIETNAM OR INDIA Cycling Tours
- SUNSAIL – Yacht Charter cruises in Queensland, Croatia, Vietnam, Tahiti & Thailand

OTHER DESTINATION – Please specify:

NEW ZEALAND WALKING

- MILFORD TRACK GUIDED OR FREEDOM WALK OR THE 8-DAY ULTIMATE HIKE
- GRAND TRAVERSE
- ABEL TASMAN WALKING OR SEA-KAYAKING
- HOLLYFORD VALLEY WALK
- TONGARIRO TREK
- ROUTEBURN WALK

AIRFARES – Please quote for flights as follows:

From: To: Class:

Departing: One-way / Return (please indicate)

NAME: DAYTIME CONTACT:

ADDRESS: P'CODE: EMAIL ADDRESS:

OTHER REQUESTS:

.....
.....

Contact Outdoor Travel direct for more details, travel brochures and reservations:

Call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020

Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au

Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au/>

Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia
Travel Agent Licence No 31102

CARBON & THE HOLIDAY & WORK ENVIRONMENT

What we can do to make a difference?

With the release of reports into the global impact to the environment of carbon emissions and the use of cars, buses, trains, boats and planes and of power generation we at **Outdoor Travel** believe we all have a responsibility to try to monitor and reduce our carbon emissions and the use of energy - not only in the business we do but in the way we do business.

We recycle all our paper, plastics and print cartridges, our letterhead is on 'conservation' recycled paper, we use low energy equipment, turn-off un-necessary appliances – including our hot-water system, we cycle to work when possible and are very conscious of waste – especially wasting water during this period of drought. We look for new ways to improve and to help our customers improve in ways that will help the environment. Around the globe there have been some creative new information sites that can give you some ideas about how you can look at a personal contribution.

We don't endorse any of these options and cannot vouch for their effectiveness or credibility but here are three options that may make a difference and make very interesting reading:



Offsets made simple - 'CARBON OFFSETTING EXPLAINED.....'

Each time we heat our homes, take a flight or drive the car, CO₂ is added into the atmosphere. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas that is released when fossil fuels such as oil, gas and coal are burnt.

Offsetting means paying someone to reduce CO₂ in the atmosphere by the same amount that your activities add. In this way you can 'neutralise' or 'balance' the CO₂ added by your activities.

Climate Care offsets your CO₂ by funding **projects** around the world. These can be in:

- Renewable energy – this replaces non-renewable fuel such as coal
- Energy efficiency – this reduces the amount of fuel needed
- Forest restoration – this absorbs CO₂ from the atmosphere as the trees grow

So as well as taking steps to reduce your 'carbon footprint' you can offset what remains, helping to promote low-carbon technologies where they make the most impact.

Find out more about **buying offsets**, or **our approach** to carbon reduction projects.

PC Power Consumption, Does it Really Matter?

More than 30 billion kilowatt-hours of energy are wasted because many of us simply forget to shut down our computers when we're not using them. If we could just improve the efficiency of how we use our PCs, the savings in energy costs would be over \$3 billion dollars! The CO₂ emissions from just 15 computers are equivalent in energy terms to the gas consumption used by one car.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PC POWER CONSUMPTION.....

LocalCooling is a 100% free power management tool from Uniblue Labs that allows users to optimise their energy savings in minutes and as a result reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions.

What Does The LocalCooling Application Do?

Download the 100% Free LocalCooling Application and it automatically optimises your PC's power consumption by using a more effective power save mode. You will be able to see your savings in real-time translated to more environmental terms such as how many trees and gallons of oil you have saved.

Local Cooling will:

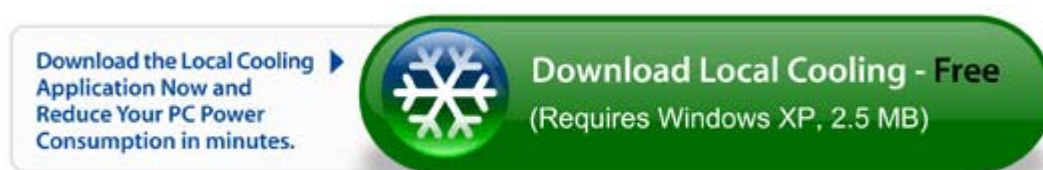
- Cut your energy bills.
- Reduce the amount of Greenhouse Gas CO2 emissions as a result of your reduced PC power consumption.
- Give you full control over your power mode settings.
- Improve your overall computing experience and efficiency.
- Show you in detail how much you have saved since installing the software.

[Learn more](#) about the [LocalCooling](#) Application and how it will help you save energy!

Help Us Grow the LocalCooling Community

The goal is to introduce 100,000,000 PC users into the Local Cooling community. If just 100 million of us optimise the efficiency of our computers' energy consumption, we could prevent over 300 billion kg of CO2 gas emissions, equivalent to over 1.8 billion gallons of oil, in just the first year alone.

[Take Part in Our Project to Spread the Word about LocalCooling](#)



See: <http://localcooling.com/facts/> and please spread the word



A Victorian based solution - <http://www.treesmart.com.au>

Each year, the average Australian vehicle emits about 4.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide - the major Greenhouse Gas. While various attempts are being made in the transport sector to reduce vehicle use and emissions, through programs such as [TravelSmart](#), an alternative way of reducing Greenhouse Gases in the atmosphere is to remove them after they have been emitted via carbon sequestration in trees.

The **TreeSmart** program aims to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by planting, maintaining and harvesting plantation eucalyptus trees. The **TreeSmart** program is different to some other carbon sequestration programs that plant trees and leave them un-maintained as a perpetual forest.

Research by TreeSmart Australia has shown that plantations that are harvested on a regular rotation can absorb more CO2 over their lifetime than can a perpetual forest, when one counts the carbon still sequestered in timber products derived from the plantation, or the reduction in fossil fuel use as a result of using the harvested timber as fuel wood. They can also do this more cost-effectively because the cost of planting is subsidised by the revenue obtained from the harvest.

The *TreeSmart* program will operate by selling subscriptions to Australian travellers ([motorists](#), [road freight operators](#), [public transport travellers](#), [air travellers](#), [conference attendees](#)) to enable the CO2 emissions from their travel to be absorbed (sequestered) in eucalyptus trees grown for eventual harvesting and replanting.

OUTDOOR TRAVEL Pty Ltd do not specifically endorse any of these options and do not vouch for the effectiveness or credibility of any of these solutions but we believe this information will help make an informed decision.

Contact **Outdoor Travel** for more details - call (03) 57551743 or Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au