



# OUTLINES

February 2006

## IMPORTANT TRAVEL NEWS & SPECIAL OFFERS.....FROM OUTDOOR TRAVEL

Your words ..... about ours

New brochure – Sherpa Walking Holidays Worldwide now available for 2006 (Pg 2)

Walking in the Yorkshire Dales – a centre-based holiday ideal for single travellers (Pg 4)

BA First class upgrade offer on flights to Europe

Castellare Di Tonda – Tuscan farmhouse Apartments – booking discounts

New movie – Crowe in Provence

Camino de Santiago – the plight of the modern Pilgrim - new book by Australian author (Pg 5)

New brochure - Crown Blue Line – Self-skipped cruisers in Europe

Suggested cruise routes in the Loire Nivernais region of France

**SPECIAL OFFER – 2 For the Price of 1 French Cruise offers for Apr/May (Pg 10)**

New inland waterway cruise boat for Holland in 2006

Travel warnings of interest

Survey – Brochure or Internet – you choose?

Discount shopping in Paris

Travel as a group?

Just flights – see our 24-hour airfares search engine to all destinations + car hire + Eurail offers

Outdoor Travel brochure order form (Pg 15)

## YOUR WORDS ..... ABOUT OURS:

*\* Just thought I would let you know that I really enjoy getting your monthly travel news updates...almost as good as my "Delicious" subscription although I see you have included a recipe in this months edition...thanks for the great read! I did get to do the Bicycle and Barge tour in Amsterdam and it was absolutely fabulous...one of the highlights was that I could count the number of hills on three fingers!* Sharon

*\* Report on the cruise from Paris to Honfleur on Canal & Co's **Esprit de l'Europe** that I took starting 1st October - absolutely superb. Comfortable ship. Excellent itinerary - charming shore excursions. Crew obliging. Chef excellent - food wonderful. A very nice concept to have a very varied trip with the sites/points of interest etc included. Strongly recommended and still fair value at full price.* Ruth

*\* Just a quick email to let you know that the whole trip, especially the Canal Boat cruise went very well."* Alan

*\* I received your brochures yesterday, and they're terrific - you've got us both hooked! My immediate hope is to book my wife's boss and his wife into one of the Tuscan apartments. I have passed on your details to a group of friends who are planning a visit this year (I think) to Cinque Terre.*

Victor

## NEW SHERPA BROCHURE

### INN-TO-INN WALKS & HIKES IN EUROPE – ACTIVE HOLIDAYS FOR ALL SEASONS



When Laurie Lee 'walked out one mid-summer morning' lured by the romance of 'following a straight white road lined with orange trees', he soon discovered, as so many other have done, that the reality of **travel at a walking pace** in Spain or even France or Italy confounds all pre-conceptions.

But Laurie could just as easily have walked out on a spring, autumn or winter morning with the benefit of the independent inn-to-inn walking holiday concepts in the **new Sherpa Expeditions** brochure.

The information provided is both inspirational and comprehensive, especially as the brochure covers most countries in Europe & includes both **self-guided, group escorted or guided walks**, general descriptions of each area, a walking itinerary outline, notes on accommodation & transport to each walk and a grading of each holiday.

Outdoor Travel with its more than 20-years of active holiday experience believes it now offers the most diverse, comprehensive range of overseas walking holidays in Australia - **for every season!**

#### **SPRING – SPAIN; BARCELONA, MONTSENY & MONSERRAT**

Under the clear blue skies and pleasant temperatures of Spring is the time to enjoy this 8-day self-guided walk – departing daily on demand - avoiding high summer, when the crowds descend on Spain's beaches & resorts

The tour comprises three days walking in the **Montserrat national park** starting from the Turo de L'Home (1700m) and traversing the forested Agudes to reach the gorge and hermitage of St Miguel del Fai.

We transfer by road to the unusual rock formations of the **Montserrat national park** for a days walk around these dramatic hills culminating at Mt San Jeroni. The mountain was sacred long before the establishment of the Benedictine monastery, and has long been the abode of hermits, a tradition surviving today.

A cable car will bring you down the mountain for a short but pleasant train journey to Barcelona, the thriving Catalan capital with its restaurants & pavement cafes in the Ramblas. Marvel at the **Gaudi** cathedral, or the Miro mosaic pavements, the newly restored opera house & enjoy the ambience of this lively city.

***An 8-day self-guided walk along in the Barcelona & Montserrat route will cost AU\$1860 per person (twin share) including 3-star hotel accommodation (with ensuite) & a traditional farmhouse for 1-night, dinner & breakfast on 4-days & B&B for 3-nights, daily baggage transfers & maps/notes & route description.***

Also available in Spain – Andalucia, Pyrenees to the Med, Canary Islands self-guided walks

## **SUMMER – SWITZERLAND; TOUR OF MONT BLANC**

One of the classic mountain walks of the world, the **Tour of Mont Blanc** circles the highest mountain in Western Europe, providing walkers with an opportunity to sample the culture and flavour of the three different countries which share the massif: France, Italy and Switzerland. Dominated throughout by views of the highest peaks in the Alps, including Mont Blanc itself (4,056m/15,767ft), the walk follows ancient pack animal routes.

Each pass opens up a new and exciting vista of the great peaks of the Alps. The trail is mostly **moderate, but with a few challenging ascents**. It is however well within the scope of most walkers. Trails are well defined and easy to follow, traversing high passes beneath spectacular glaciers or passing through Alpine villages. The satisfaction of completing one of the world's great walks provides the finishing touch to a great holiday.

***A 14-day escorted walk around Mont Blanc will cost AU\$2465 per person (twin share) (AU\$2310 for self-guided walks) including accommodation, baggage transfers & maps/notes & route description.***

Also available in Switzerland – Alpine Pass Route, Haute Route, Bernese Oberland self-guided walks

## **AUTUMN – ITALY: EXPLORE THE TUSCAN LANDSCAPE - SOUTH OF SIENA**

Late Summer/Early Autumn is an ideal time for a walking holiday in Italy, and with this in mind we are recommending our 7-day self guided `South of Siena` walking tour.

This tour traverses the attractive landscape of the **Amiata hills** - home to hot springs, old castles and monasteries, medieval towns and villages as well as the fine wine producing area of **Brunello de Montalcino** (perhaps the Grange Hermitage of Italy).

Setting out from the beautiful city of Siena, other highlights include crossing the `Crete Senesi` - a ridge where cypress lined tracks lead to distant farmhouses - the 14C Convent of Monte Oliveto Maggiore with its world famous frescoes, plus free entrance to the ancient thermal pool at **Bagno Vignoni** before finishing in **Montepulciano**. This self-guided walking tour offers daily departures from **April through to November**, 6-nights bed and breakfast accommodation in two and three star hotels plus detailed route notes and maps.

***A 7-day self-guided walk South of Sienna will cost AU\$1780 per person (twin share) including hotel accommodation (with ensuite), daily baggage transfers & maps/notes & route description.***

Also available in Italy – self-guided walks in Tuscany, Umbria, Cinque Terre, Elba Island, Apuan Alps, Amalfi Coast & **NEW** for 2006 the Vinschgau Valley tucked between Trentino & the Dolomites

## **WINTER – FRANCE; THE VERMILLION COAST FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA**

As the days shorten and winter approaches the dramatic coastline where the **Pyrenees** tumble to the **Mediterranean** has an average of 300 days of sunshine each year. This magnificent self-guided walking route can be enjoyed almost all year. Stunning mountain scapes, sea views, bright skies and abundant seafood, characterise the area. The relatively gentle stages of 4 to 6 hours a day allow plenty of time for relaxation and to enjoy the off season calm of the pretty fishing ports you descend to each night.

Our journey starts in the dramatic **Gorges du Lavall** where we climb to the Tour de Massane & descend to the charming old fishing port of **Collioure** with its brightly painted Catalan fishing boats bobbing beneath the old streets with their colourful flower bedecked balconies.

Then we climb the Alberes Mountains to the **Tour Madeloc, one of many ancient watchtowers that guarded the frontier between France and Spain** before descending through splendid vineyards to the seaside town of **Banyuls**.

We cross the frontier into **Catalonia** again climbing up to the Pyrenees ridge before descending to Port Bou. From here we follow a chain of pretty bays to Llanca, before climbing to the monastery of San Pere de Rodes.

From Port de la Selva we again follow the attractive coastline into the nature reserve named after the beautiful village of **Cadaques**.

***An 8-day self-guided walk along the Vermillion Coast will cost from AU\$1570 per person (twin share) including hotel accommodation (with ensuite), daily baggage transfers & maps/notes & route description.***

Also available in France – self-guided walks in Dordogne, Provence, Cevennes, Ardeche, Alsace, Corsica, Burgundy & **NEW** for 2006 the Morzine region bordering Switzerland

**Contact Outdoor Travel for further information and reservations on a range of *active holidays* walking, trekking, sea kayaking, sailing, boating or cycling in Europe - Call: Toll free 1800 331 582**

## **CENTRE-BASED GROUP WALKING IN THE YORKSHIRE DALES**

### **The Yorkshire Dales National Park**

Deeply rural, with its stone-walled dales and an abundance of natural beauty, including wild flowers, waterfalls, scars, caves and limestone pavements. **The Dales** are home to a number of features for you to discover, such as the 250ft cliff of **Malham Cove** and **Gordale Scar**. Streams and quaint former lead mining communities are dotted throughout the beautiful valleys, while **The Three Peaks** of Ingleborough, Wharfedale and Pen-y-ghent are extremely rewarding for the keen walker. The challenging long distance trail of the **Dales Way** offers a complete Dales experience.

### **NEWFIELD HALL, MALHAMDALE, SOUTHERN YORKSHIRE DALES**

An imposing stone mansion built in 1856, stands proudly at the end of a tree-lined drive in two acres of mature grounds. Retaining its 19th Century ambience, it has a pillared entrance, baronial hall and courtyards. **The hall is peacefully situated in the southern part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park**, and less than half a mile from the Pennine Way, which leads north to the geological wonders of Malhamdale

**Cost Per person:** AU\$1550 (single or twin share)

**Tour price includes:** 7 nights of twin share accommodation with en-suite, breakfast & dinner each night, picnic lunches, guided walking as described and sightseeing (at extra cost - as available).

**Departure Dates:** Fri 14 April; Sat 13, 20, 27 May; Sat 10, 17, 24 June; Sat 1, 8, 15, 22 July; Sat 26 Aug; Sat 2, 9, 22, Sept; Sat 2, 9, 16, 23; Sat 7 Oct

## **BA OFFERS FIRST CLASS UPGRADE**

British Airways is offering clients a new business class deal to London that includes a one-way upgrade to first class and a side trip to one of 24 destinations in Europe. The offer applies to BA-operated flights only

The Club World deal is priced from \$9306 ex Sydney, which includes taxes and surcharges, as well as the upgrade and side trip.

Clients must book & depart before March 31, 2006 – call Lucie at our fares desk 1800 331 582 for bookings

## **CASTELLARE DE TONDA – TUSCAN HOLIDAY APARTMENTS**

### **Long stay discounts**

Remember Outdoor Travel is the exclusive booking agent in Australia for this wonderful accommodation centre right in the Pisa, Florence, and Siena heartlands. We offer 1, 2 or 3-bedroom apartments on this secluded country estate with swimming pools, a restaurant, shop & riding centre & over 3-kilometres of walking or mountain biking trails with some of the finest scenery in Italy.

## Holiday apartment discounts for 2006:

- \* Stay for 3-weeks before 29<sup>th</sup> April & after 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006 & get 25% off the rental costs.
- \* Stay for 2-weeks before 1<sup>st</sup> April & after 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006 & get 20% off the rental costs.
- \* Stay for 2-weeks between 8<sup>th</sup> April & 17<sup>th</sup> June 2006 & get 10% off the rental costs.

For more details of farmhouses apartments for rent in Tuscany click-on to:

<http://zope-prod.netc.net.au:8180/sme/outdoortravel/content/castellare>

## 2006 WILL BE A POPULAR YEAR FOR PROVENCE & LUBERON!

According to News Cinema 2006: Russell Crowe, Ridley Scott and the French actress Marion Cotillard will be soon appear in an adaptation for cinema of Peter Mayle's novel, "A Good Year" ("Un Bon Cru" in French). The shooting in Provence, precisely where British writer Peter Mayle lived & fell in love with the way of life and people in 1988. Peter Mayle's novel is the story of a British banker (Russel Crowe) who will inherit a vineyard in Provence but, on his arrival, he meets a pretty Californian woman (Marion Cotillard) who also will want her part of this inheritance...

Outdoor Travel offer a range of walking or cycling holidays in the Luberon or across many regions of Provence & southern France. Call us today for a brochure or see 'What's New' on our website [www.outdoortravel.com.au](http://www.outdoortravel.com.au)

## CAMINO DE SANTIAGO - QUEST OF THE MODERN PILGRIM by Vincent Burke

From the 10th century pilgrims flocked in their thousands to Santiago de Compostela in Spain to venerate the relics of St James the Apostle. After his martyrdom in Jerusalem, his body was taken to the coast of Galicia, where his tomb was allegedly discovered in the 9th century. A shrine was built to him, along with a magnificent cathedral in the 12th century.

In the Middle Ages, Santiago became Europe's most important shrine after Rome. After a fall in popularity in subsequent centuries, it has re-emerged as one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations for young and old from all walks of life.

There are several starting-points in France for the pilgrim route, each around 1500km from Santiago, and they all converge just across the Spanish border, where the route is known as the Royal French Road.

This leads to the most popular starting point in Spain, Roncesvalles, nearly 800km from the shrine. Walking an average of 25km, it takes about a month to complete the pilgrimage on foot, a lot less for cyclists. Driving does not qualify as a true pilgrimage.

The route passes through both lush agricultural land and the bleakest of terrains; over mountains and down to sweeping plains; along isolated farm tracks linking tiny hamlets; next to frantic freeways leading to majestic cities, including their less appealing outer suburbs; and through ancient towns perched on hilltops, offering magnificent views. Each day, the vista changes.

The Camino to Santiago is said to be a Christian adaptation of an earlier Celtic pilgrim trail, which followed the path of the stellar formation, The Milky Way. The word compostela is derived from the field of stars in Spanish.

### **Why would anyone contemplate a month or more of footslogging pain, trudging relentlessly for more than 25km a day across bleak terrain or beside busy roads and freeways – all for what?**

Curious, I decided to explore why tens of thousands of people a year from all over the world devote their holidays to doing the pilgrimage (or Camino) to Santiago de Compostela, a town in north-west Spain. Lately, the numbers are soaring. In 1986, fewer than 3000 pilgrims were registered, but by 1999, a Holy Year (which occurs approximately every five years), the total was nearly 155,000. In 2003, the total reached nearly 75,000

Driving 800km of the route from southwest France across northern Spain last year, I asked a number of pilgrims why they were doing it.

An Italian in his 30s was walking in memory of his father, who had recently died. "For me, this walk is partly religious, but it's also a holiday which gives me time to have my own thoughts and memories of my father. I have already discovered a lot about myself – most of all I am amazed about what I have achieved."

A young Hungarian was doing the walk, because she had reached a crisis in her career as a graphic artist, and hoped to find an answer along the way. She was reticent about her motivation and expectations. "It's all written down in my daily journal."

A young Australian farmer from Ararat hoped his Camino would help him rediscover his religious beliefs. "I started from square one all over again with my belief system."

The motivation for many pilgrims has been religious, to venerate the relics of St James and gain forgiveness for their sins. For many of today's "pilgrims", the walk is more like a kind of extreme sport, a supreme challenge, or simply a theme for an active holiday.

This was the case for many of the Europeans I met, some of whom had set off on foot from their homes in France, Belgium and Italy. Many would have walked up to 1000km by the time they reached Santiago.

A middle-aged French woman put it well. "This is my second Camino. I came four years ago with my daughter, but all she cared about was getting there. This time, I don't mind if I finish or not. This is for me. I am very happily married, but at home I am always part of a relationship – a wife, a mother, an employee. Here, I am just me."

She added that there was a very good reason for doing this pilgrimage on her own. "I've been told that there is a very high risk of divorce among married couples who do the Camino together. Spending so much time together can mean discovering things you would prefer not to know, which you can ignore at home."

Some pilgrims clearly had a socio-political motivation. One of my most moving memories was reading messages in a visitor's book in a tiny isolated chapel in southwest France. Eight hundred pilgrims had signed this book during the first two weeks of August. Given the troubled times in which we live, one message said it all: "Vive les marcheurs. Nous sauverons le monde. (Long live the walkers. We will save the world)."

For most, the motivation is spiritual in its broadest sense. Anyone who has bushwalked through the Outback will understand this.

Although there are some couples, families and groups of friends, most pilgrims walk alone, wrapped in their own world, concentrating on not falling over, their steel-tipped walking staves tap-tapping their progress towards Santiago.

A fit, 30-year-old Frenchman said people had to walk alone as each person had his own walking rhythm and different capacities. His target was to walk a huge 37km a day. "Sometimes I think I'm mad to be doing this, and each day I worry if I will make it."

Despite the desire for solitude during the day, the walkers enjoy great companionship at night, sharing meals in the taverns with other pilgrims, developing fleeting but sometimes-intense relationships with people from all nationalities and walks of life.

They share very basic, but cheap, accommodation in the numerous alberques or pilgrims' refuges along the way. Most of these refuges offer bunk-style beds, in which pilgrims of both sexes and all ages have to tolerate other people's nocturnal habits – notably intrusive snoring and farting.

The daily pattern consists of rising early, queuing for the (often cold) shower, and setting off at first light – if not before – in the hope of reaching the next destination, 20 or more kilometres away, before the refuge is full. Arriving too late often means walking a further 10km to find accommodation. "No room at the inn" can still be a real problem, no matter who you are.

International tolerance is often a challenge. Just as the Germans have a reputation for bagging the best poolside sun beds in beach resorts, so they have gained a similar reputation on the Camino for rising earlier than others, and striding ahead to ensure they get the best beds in the next refuge.

Then there is the scenery. For most of us, our vision of Europe consists of magnificent stone monuments, Roman bricks and Tuscan rooftops, shimmering in a hazy sunlight – and not forgetting the ABC of European tourism, Another Bloody Church.

The Camino offers all these experiences. Pamplona is more than the running of the bulls: the façade of Burgos cathedral is stunning, and its latticework stonewalls are extraordinary. There are several examples of Gaudi's architectural genius along the Camino, and the stained glass windows in Leon Cathedral are arguably far more dramatic than any to be seen in the Gothic cathedrals of France or Italy.

For devotees of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* there is the frighteningly majestic ruined castle of the Knights Templar in Ponferrada and lots more of interest on this pilgrimage.

Contrasting greatly with the major cities, the tiny hilltop towns through which the Camino runs are equally captivating. The pilgrims today still walk across the bridges built for the pilgrims of the 12th and 13th centuries. Pilgrims can also stay

in 11th century refuges and pray in the same churches, which sustained the religious fervour of their predecessors nearly 1000 years ago.

In most towns and villages, a special evening mass is held for the pilgrims. Even the non-Catholics appreciate receiving a blessing to speed them safely on their way. Local people are very supportive of the pilgrims, whoever they are.

The Camino is punctuated by many historical figures: the legends of Roland, the mighty Charlemagne and El Cid, the ecclesiastical legacy of St Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, and the more recent General Franco, who was born in the region and is still regarded by some as a hero.

Northern Spain epitomises the brutal Christian reconquista of the country, which drove out both Muslims and Jews in the 8th century, and led to the crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. I found it discomfiting to see statues of St James portrayed as the mythical slayer of the Muslims.

The tensions in northern Spain, where the Basque separatist movement is still waging its own civil war for independence, cannot be ignored. Two bombs exploded in the Santiago region during my stay, though without causing any injuries.

The terrain in Galicia will appeal to Australians who yearn for the open countryside. Whether it is the stone and brick buildings, which bear witness to thousands of years of history in much of Europe, in Galicia you feel a real energy from the land, and especially the Camino itself, which seems to urge you ever onward.

Pilgrimages were big business in medieval times, especially wayside inns. Today there are signs of a burgeoning revival of this kind of hospitality, as more and more tourists become pilgrims. The most remarkable manifestation of local entrepreneurial spirit is the emergence of Internet cafes in ancient buildings along the Camino, enabling pilgrims to keep in touch with friends and family.

Memorable resting places include Roncesvalles (which at 780km from Santiago is a favoured starting point for many pilgrims); Puente la Reina; Castrojeriz, possibly the best example of a pilgrim road town; Hospital de Orbigo (with its famous bridge, Paso Honroso); and the ultimate gem, O Cebreiro in Galicia itself.

Set at 1600m above sea level, O Cebreiro is literally as well as spiritually the high point of the pilgrim trail. For some it is downhill from here in more ways than one, and their actual arrival in Santiago is often an anti-climax.

In order to obtain your compostela or certificate on arrival in Santiago, it is necessary to prove you have walked or cycled at least the last 100km. This is authenticated by having your pilgrim's passport stamped in each town along the route.

The biggest priority for the pilgrims each day (possibly more urgent than finding accommodation) is to get this passport stamped, so they can receive their compostela. Church officials in Santiago only hand it out after rigorous inspection.

The final 100km stretch attracts a huge influx of Spaniards, anxious to obtain their compostela with the minimum effort. Spaniards being Spaniards, their arrival inevitably means a party spirit begins to emerge during the final stages of the Camino. For some this is a disturbing distraction. One of the French pilgrims I interviewed, who had walked from central France, felt the Spanish were cheating. For all the pilgrims, however, the Spanish influx makes it even more difficult to get a bed in the refuge each night.

Arriving in Santiago is often accompanied by a feeling of disenchantment, partly because the walk into the city itself (as with several of the cities en route) is through unappealing suburbs and past several second-hand car dealerships. For many, the anticlimax is due to their realisation that they have not found what they were searching for when they set out on their purgative journey. They also realise glumly that the world of reality is about to confront them again.

The young farmer from Ararat described graphically his moment of "re-entering the world". "I realised I can't sit in a field and meditate all day. I have to go back into the cities, the traffic jams, deal with arseholes, and make a living."

Some maintain their sense of spiritual purpose by continuing to the final stage of the original Celtic Milky Way, which leads to Finisterre – the end of the world. It is traditional to burn their pilgrim clothes on the beach, in order to symbolise casting-off the old life prior to the pilgrimage.

Santiago itself is a bustling tourist city in its own right, and the pilgrims suddenly lose their sense of identity and purpose. But staying in a decent hotel is a refreshing change from the conditions of the Camino, and Santiago offers a Parador, reputedly Spain's oldest hotel, stunningly beautiful and very expensive.

A pilgrimage is far from being a relaxing holiday, lying in the sun with a paperback, but it sure beats having to compete for the best sun beds by the swimming pool. It is an ideal experience for young Australians on their "rite of passage" tour of Europe, offering the chance to meet up with young and old people from different countries, all united by a common purpose.

For some lucky pilgrims, the experience may be transforming. For most, the best that can be hoped for from a rigorous spiritual journey of this kind may be a resigned acceptance of the life we have to live and a hope for peace – peace of mind, even if peace in the world is a more forlorn hope.

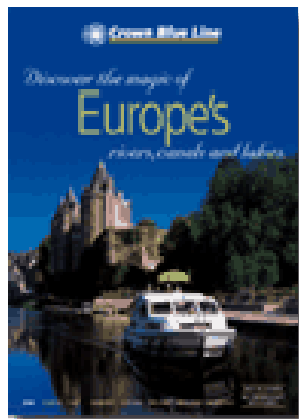
*Adelaide market researcher and author Vincent Burke is planning to earn his compostela later this year. He is also writing a series of travel books, Europe Travel Planner, published by Wild & Woolley, the first volume of which will be launched at the London Book Fair in March. Information on the Camino can be found at the official Santiago pilgrims' website, [www.csj.org.uk](http://www.csj.org.uk)*

**Outdoor Travel offer three options for those contemplating either a short highlight walking tour, a bicycle tour or individual self-guided walks in one-week sections from Le Puy to Santiago. Call us today for a copy of our latest brochure on 1800 331 582**

## **CROWN BLUE LINE - NEW BROCHURE NOW AVAILABLE**

### **Self-skipped cruises in France, Italy, Holland, Scotland, England, Ireland or Germany - new discount offer for bookings made in February - call us 1800 331 582**

The ever vigilant men & women guarding Australia's ports has intercepted our 2006 edition of this full colour waterways holidays brochure since October & we must apologise to anyone still waiting for a copy. Small pieces of bark were found with the consignment & the brochures have been quarantined in Melbourne awaiting the all clear.



If you are planning a boating holiday on the waterways of Europe this year you can find the 2006 booking form & price lists on our website. You can also find a quick-link to the full website with detailed information about the fleet of over 600 boats & the many bases we have strategically situated on the most popular boating destinations:

Here is the link address: [http://www.crownblueline.com/index.html?&agentlogged=cbl\\_outdoortravel](http://www.crownblueline.com/index.html?&agentlogged=cbl_outdoortravel)

Bank Holidays lock-closure dates in France for 2006 - remember to check these dates against your travel plans:

14 April (Holy Friday - only in Alsace)  
16 April (Easter Sunday)  
17 April (Easter Monday)  
1st May (May day)  
8th May  
25th May (Ascension)  
4th June (Whitsunday)  
14th July  
15th August  
1st November

**Regional Canal Boat & Base News** - Our Base in Gannay has been moved to Chatillion sur Loire, which is now our main base in Loire region. Chatillion sur Loire also is replacing the relay function of Briare base, i.e. the Crown Blue Line one ways from/to Dezice are also now managed from there.

Our apologies for not having changed this in the new 2006 Crown Blue Line brochure as the decision was taken only after the early printing dates. We now have on all sides of the circle a service point and we are a lot better situated to ensure perfect service to our customers, regardless of the direction they are going to choose to undertake their cruise. The best

result from this new base structure is the fact, that we can now operate two weeks one-ways between Chatillon and Migennes; both ways North or South are feasible in two weeks.

## **SUGGESTED CRUISE ROUTES IN THE LOIRE NIVERNAIS REGION OF FRANCE** **From our base manager on the spot (in Franaise):**

### **DECIZE CHATILLON SUR LOIRE - 125 kms, 26 locks, 27 hours one way cruising time**

*A visit in Nevers is imperative; it has a very nice architectural heritage. The Palais Ducal is one of the first Castles of the Loire valley. Do not miss Saint Cyr and Sainte Julitte Cathedral. Discover the windows of the earthenware makers while savouring nougatine or a negus.*

*Stopping place of Saint Jacques de Compostelle pilgrims, la Charit  sur Loire, famous for its priory church is also the meeting place of booklovers. There you will have a superb panorama of the Loire.*

*You will find in Pouilly sur Loire good tables with succulent wines and you can go for a nice walk along the river lined by plane trees. This section is classified as a nature reserve.*

*The medieval city of Sancerre will enable you to go back in time. Its old streets, its monuments, its vestiges of past days give a welcome change of surroundings to the walkers. Do not forget to taste a crottin de Chavignol with a glass of wine.*

*You will then join Chatillon sur Loire. Go and discover the ruins of Gaillard Castle (12th century), wine grower's houses from the 16th and 17th centuries and mansions of flourishing shopkeepers. Also visit the cemetery and the Protestant temple, witnesses of an eventful period when Chatillon was a Protestant stronghold constantly besieged by catholic forces.*

*The famous Briare steel canal bridge, the longest in Europe, is only 5 kms away from our relay base. As there is no lock between these two points you will easily cross this outstanding structure.*

### **DECIZE TANNAY - 99kms, 72 locks, 35 hours one way cruising time**

*To join the Canal du Nivernais from our base, you will cruise a bit on the Loire river – the last wild river in Europe- while crossing Decize, a lively city appreciated by history lovers.*

*Then the cruise will take you to Cercy la Tour, a medieval city and sanctuary for fishermen. The Etang de Vaux, a very nice fishing place, the Etang de Baye is made for water leisure.*

*Then you will join La Collancelle with its 3 vaults, an outstanding structure before crossing the 16 locks of the Sardy ladder with its lock keepers houses. A tour in the nice medieval city of Corbigny and you will nearly be in Tannay where you will enjoy a nice glass of white wine while admiring the panoramic view on the Morvan.*

### **TANNAY LAROCHE MIGENNES - 100kms, 50 locks, 35 hours one way cruising time**

*The floating of logs down a river was one of the main and oldest economic activity of Clamecy, the Venice of the Nivernais, until the Canal du Nivernais was created. Do not miss the charm of its old streets surrounded by strange houses, the richness of Saint Martin Collegiate Church and the picturesque quality of its quays.*

*Then you will be in the heart of famous vineyards: Vermenton, Coulanges la Vineuse (production of red and ros  Burgundy wines), Irancy, one of the most picturesque village of the Auxerre area producing a rather tonic wine, Bailly where the Cr mant de Bourgogne is produced.*

*Then you will join one of the most beautiful towns of France: Auxerre. It is from a boat moored on the port that you will enjoy the best view of the old town. The beautiful monuments, which stretched along the town, attest a remarkable past (Saint Etienne Cathedral, Saint Germain Abbey) You will end your cruise in Laroche Migennes with a walk along the Yonne banks or along the Canal de Bourgogne.*

*So whether you are a novice or a confirmed sailor, keen on nature or culture, gourmet or art lover, there will always be something to discover in the Loire Nivernais area.*

## STOP PRESS TRAVEL NEWS – FRENCH CRUISE OFFERS

We are pleased to offer the following Canal & Co cruises at **2 passengers for the price of 1** for select dates only in 2006

- \* BURGUNDY - LITOTE 08 APRIL - 4 CABINS ONLY – AU\$2815 for 2 sharing
- \* BURGUNDY - LIBELLULE 15 APRIL - 3 CABINS ONLY – AU\$2830 for 2 sharing
- \* ALSACE - LORRAINE 22 APRIL - 4 CABINS ONLY – AU\$2830 for 2 sharing
- \* PARIS REGION - ANACOLUTHE 06, 13 & 20 MAY – LAST FEW SPACES – AU\$2725 for 2 sharing

Quality, fully inclusive cruising & sightseeing program with all meals & 6-night ensuite cabin accommodation.

All cruises can be combined with a return transfer from central Paris (at extra cost) & Paris hotels

First come first served – these places won't last.....

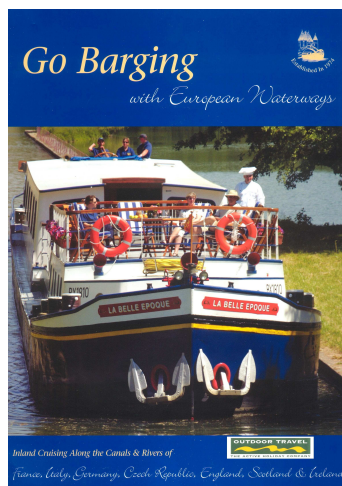
## HOTEL BARGE CRUISING IN HOLLAND New vessel launched for 2006

European Waterways are delighted to launch their new vessel Monarch cruising the waterways of Holland.

Monarch was originally built in 1997 for a wealthy German industrialist as his personal river yacht. Monarch was first chartered by European Waterways in the summer of 2005 for a 9-week long trans-Europe cruise from Amsterdam to Constanta in the Black Sea Delta via Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania. Prior to the 9-week voyage the vessel was inspected by European Waterways to ensure its suitability for this extraordinary voyage mainly on the Rhine and Danube rivers. After the trip the hull and stern gear of the vessel was inspected back in Holland and everything was in good shape!

The Dutch crew is multi-lingual and the skipper and wife team have many years experience cruising all over Europe in passenger vessels. 2006 will mark the second year of operation for the vessel. It is fair to say that the vessel herself is a cut above the traditional hotel barge market mainly due to the extra 10 feet of beam, which Monarch has. This gives very well proportioned cabins and bathrooms and three interior seating areas for clients. Junior Suite beds are standard European-sized twin beds, 3 ft x 6ft 3", the Suites are double only and 6ft wide by 6 ft 3" long.

Quality of cuisine, service on board and crew will be assured as with all the cruise boats operated by European Waterways and available in Australia from Outdoor Travel or your travel agent.



For reservations or a free copy of the current Go Barging – European Holidays brochure call **1800 331 582**

## INTERESTING' WARNINGS (see links [www.outdoortravel.com.au](http://www.outdoortravel.com.au))

### **AUSTRALIA - CREDIT CARDS CANCELLED AS A PRECAUTION**

Sydney Morning Herald: A growing number of cardholders are being told by banks that their cards have been cancelled because they have used them in cities or countries identified by software as hotspots for fraud. But the banks will not publish blacklists to warn customers in advance, because it might reduce credit card use.

Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade advises that credit card fraud is "extensive" in Malaysia, "widespread" in Brazil, "common" in Russia and Nigeria, and increasing in France. The Australian Bankers Association's director of security, Tony Burke, said intelligence on hotspots changed rapidly. Credit cardholders who go overseas should give their bank their travel itinerary if they do not want their cards cancelled during their absence or when they return.

### **NEW ZEALAND – AUCKLAND - EXOTIC MOSQUITO INTERCEPTED**

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Quarantine Service (MQS) staff found live Asian Tiger Mosquitoes on an imported rubbish truck off-loaded from a ship from Japan at Auckland Port on 11th November. The adult mosquito, 5 pupae and 32 larvae were found in water in a drain in the truck. The truck was treated immediately and Auckland Regional Public Health staff are treating and monitoring the surrounding area to detect any further mosquitoes.

The Asian Tiger Mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) is known to be able to spread of a number of diseases including Dengue Fever, Ross River Virus, Japanese Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. The Asian Tiger Mosquito would be a great challenge to eradicate if it were to become established.

## **BROCHURES BEAT THE WEB: STUDY – WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

A recent decision by one major walking holiday operator in the UK to stop printing brochures & to rely on the internet to distribute more accurate updated information on their holidays has caused us to question what our customers feel about the paper v. screen debate.

The Internet has a long way to go before it replaces the brochure, according to research conducted by UK low-cost airline EasyJet. A survey of 2,000 consumers showed more than one in three '30-somethings' researched holidays using a brochure as their only source of information. Around three in 10 respondents aged 60 or above did not bother to look at a single source of information before booking.

However, the research also showed 22 per cent of those taking package holidays said key elements of their trip failed to live up to the brochure's or the travel agent's description. EasyJet claimed young travellers were the most likely to book a package holiday, with the research showing only one in five '20-somethings' were independent travellers.

*At Outdoor Travel we hope that what we say & how we describe our holidays both on the telephone, in our trip documentation or on our website is both inspirational, useful, accurate & factual. Please be our judges & let us know of your experiences?*

## **MILECATCHER SAILING VOYAGES – FROM HAMILTON ISLAND**

Looking for the ultimate sailing adventure in Australia?

Due to popular demand we have developed some MileCatcher Voyages between Hamilton Island and Fraser Island, Harvey Bay. Passengers are accepted as paying crew-members – both novice & experienced sailors are welcome.

Stops may include the famous Percy Isles, Lady Musgrave & Lady Elliot Islands and also the stunning Great Sandy Straights inside Fraser Island.

### **Passage: Hamilton Island to Fraser Island:**

Depart Hamilton Is: 4 Mar 2006 - Arrive Fraser Is: 14 Mar 2006

Depart Hamilton Is: 1 Apr 2006 - Arrive Fraser Is: 11 Apr 2006

### **Passage: Fraser Island to Hamilton Island:**

Depart Fraser Is: 17 Mar 2006 - Arrive Hamilton Is: 27 Mar 2006

Depart Fraser Is: 14 Apr 2006 - Arrive Hamilton Is: 24 Apr 2006

With a maximum 4 guests per voyage, these special MileCatcher Voyages costs \$2,500 per person including all sail training, onboard accommodation, all meals and beverages.

The voyages promise an unforgettable adventure where dramatic landscapes are framed by the pristine waters of the southern Great Barrier Reef.

Call Martyn on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations

## TRAVEL DISCOUNT SHOPPING IN PARIS



### Coming to France?

Planning a trip to Paris? Don't forget to take advantage of our special offers: free Paris maps, 10% discount cards; 12% tourist tax refunds and invitations to our weekly Friday fashion show at 3 p.m. Enjoy our unique services: welcome & information desk, interpreters, currency exchange office, personal shoppers, beauty and hair salons, several restaurants, hotel deliveries, worldwide shipping and much more!

To order our Free Paris maps, 10% discount cards and invitation to the weekly fashion show, please [click here](#).

## OUTDOOR TRAVEL AS A GROUP?

Remember travelling as your own 'group' can entitle you to discounts or special services on any of our holidays. A 'group' can be anything from two couples travelling together, a few golfing mates & their partners, up to 20 + members of the local bush-walking club.

Often the best holidays evolve at a dinner table, over a glass or two of good wine. Be it a week's walking on the Camino de Santiago in Spain, a cruise on a riverboat in France or relaxing at a farmhouse in Tuscany, - often being with family or like-minded friends - can turn a great holiday into a memorable one!

So think about who you'd like to spend time with & call us to put together your own 'group' holiday itinerary to any of the destinations we cover in our brochures – at whatever price budget or accommodation level.

Call Sue or Lucie on (03) 57501 441 to talk about your ideas.

## JUST FLIGHTS TO ANYWHERE?

We specialise in getting you the best value airfares to destinations in Europe or around the world.

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*We can also assist with stop-over accommodation, day tours & travel insurance.*

Contact **Lucie at the Outdoor Travel Fares Desk** directly for more details & her personal recommendations - call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57501 441



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<b>8 Day in 2 Mth + 1 FREE DAY 9D in 2M</b>	Adult \$699 Saver \$595 Youth \$452	Adult \$762 Saver \$647 Youth \$492	Adult \$824 Saver \$699 Youth \$532
<b>10 Day in 2 Mth + 1 FREE DAY 11D in 2M</b>	Adult \$807 Saver \$685 Youth \$522	Adult \$870 Saver \$737 Youth \$562	Adult \$932 Saver \$790 Youth \$602

- o Saver - Minimum 2 passengers to travel all sectors together
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### Avis France

Book Renault Megane (Group C CDMR)  
pay Opel Corsa price (Group B EDMR) from **\$49**

Book Renault Scenic 5 seat (Group H IVMR)  
pay Renault Megane price (Grp C CDMR) from **\$57**

Book Renault Scenic 7 seat (Grp K XVMR)  
pay Renault Scenic 5 seat (Grp D IDMR) from **\$69**

Rates are per day, based on 7-13 day rentals. Book by 31 Mar 06 for travel 1 Apr 06 - 31 Mar 07. Not valid 15 Jul 06 - 15 Aug 06, 22 Dec 06 - 02 Jan 07.

### Europcar Germany

Book Seat Leon (Grp CCMR) or VW Golf (Grp CLMR)  
pay VW Polo price (Group ECMR) **\$55**

Book VW Passat (Group IDMR)  
pay Seat Leon price (Group CCMR) **\$64**

Book VW Passat Wagon (Group IWMR)  
pay VW Golf Wagon price (Group CWMR) **\$70**

Rates are per day, based on 6-13 day rentals. Book by 31 Mar 06 for travel 1 Apr - 31 May 06 and 1 Aug - 30 Sep 06.

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### Avis Italy

## Book and pay and receive a group upgrade!



FIAT PUNTO

Book & pay Citroen C2 (Group B ECMR) **\$53**  
upgrade to Fiat Punto (Group C EDMR)

Book & pay Fiat Punto (Group C EDMR) **\$63**  
upgrade to Opel Astra (Group D CCMR)

Rates are per day. Based on 2-13 day rentals.  
Book by 28 Feb 06 for travel 1 Jan-31 Dec 2006.



OPEL ASTRA

Prices are subject to availability at the time of booking and may vary due to currency fluctuations and changes to taxes or charges. Seasonal surcharges apply for other dates. For full Terms and Conditions refer to Outdoor Travel or any Tempo Holidays brochure.

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

- ) SHERPA EUROPE INN TO INN - Independent self-guided walking in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Spain & most countries of Europe also mountain expeditions worldwide including Morocco, Tanzania & South America
- ) SHERPA CYCLING HOLIDAYS - Self-guided France, Italy, Spain, the UK, Ireland & most places in Europe
- ) SHERPA EUROPE – WALKER'S BRITAIN - Self-guided walking in England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales
- ) FOOTLOOSE & FREEWHEELING & WEEKAWAY - Independent & Small Group Guided Walking &/or Cycling Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece & UK
- ) CAMINO DE SANTIAGO – Walking or cycling the Way of St James (France or Spain)
- ) WALKING SAFARI COMPANY - Small group themed walking holidays in France or Spain – with a donkey
- ) CROWN BLUE LINE - Self-skippered boats in France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Scotland, England & Ireland
- ) GO BARGING – EUROPEAN WATERWAYS - All inclusive Hotel Barges in France, Germany, UK & Ireland
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