

# Willamette International Travel

Experience the World

## INVITATIONS

### Viking Cruise Evening

Thursday, April 30  
WIT Travel Offices  
Starts 6:00 pm

See page 5

### African Afternoon

Sunday, June 7  
WIT Travel Offices  
Starts 2:00 pm

See page 10

## Inside

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Spring 2020

## Changing of the Guard

We are sure this will not come as a big surprise to many of you, especially those who have asked “when are you both going to slow down”. We have been able to tell some of you personally this news and would have loved to have told more of you this way, but that has not proven possible.

Last July we signed a letter of intent to sell Willamette International Travel to Paul Barry. Paul is based in Kirkland, Washington and owns an investment company whose portfolio does include a diverse group of companies including ones in travel. As of this month, transfer of all the various appointments were approved and are now under the new ownership. Because of Paul’s background with both small and large travel companies, we felt he was the right one to take Willamette into its new era. We know he believes in the same business philosophy as we do and appreciates his employees as well as his clients.

Nancy Fowler, who has been our General Manager for the last couple of years, is now officially “in charge”. As none of you have asked me over the last several months “what is going on at Willamette?” it would confirm that Nancy, along with the rest of the staff, have been doing a good job.

The plan is for me to complete the files I have started (many are booked out into 2021). Which does mean I will be around for at least 12 to 18 months. For new trips we will bring in another Agent, probably Lindsay, Jenne or another Agent in the office, who will sit in on the initial discussions. When this is not possible, I will do an in-depth recap to them. Having worked with so many of you for decades, I do think I have a good understanding of your likes and dislikes, and want to impart as much of this information as I can to staff. They will follow up making all the reservations, asking for my input and help if necessary.

As you know, we are very proud of our Travel Consultants and would match them against any other Travel Agency in the Pacific Northwest or beyond. Most of you know Nancy, Pam and Barbara who have been with Willamette for 37 plus years. I know you have the same faith in them as you have placed in me. Hopefully you will get to know Lindsay, who has been with us almost 2 years, and Jennifer (Jenne) who joined us last October, placing the same trust in them. Both have varied and interesting backgrounds, both enjoy discovering new destinations, have inquisitive minds, and had traveled to unique destinations before joining us. Most importantly, both want to provide the same type of customer service we have become known for. I am thrilled to work side by side with them.

Change is never easy! During the last 2 years, our personal doctor’s and dentist have retired, and after decades we have had to adjust to someone new. So, we understand the “getting to know you growing pains” but it has been worth it for us in these new relationships. I know you will feel the same way. I am not immediately jumping ship but staying on to help build for you another long-term relationship.

John officially retires June 30. I will be here at least through summer of 2021 and maybe a little longer. I will, however, not always be working in the office, working sometimes off site. But rest assured, when I am in the country I will be reachable.

The last thing for John and me (and all the staff) to do is to thank you all for making Willamette such a part of your lives. Your loyalty and referrals have been amazing and the reason we are still around after 43 years! Remember, I plan on being around for the next 12-18 months, just no longer “the boss”.

— Christina Cooper

Willamette International Travel is not responsible for any errors or omissions contained in this newsletter.

# Europe

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## CROATIA

Croatia is clearly one of the hot spots in Europe early planning is essential. Maybe think about going outside of peak season. Pam Davis explored Croatia with her daughter in 2019.

It is hard for you to know what to expect, when thinking of Croatia; we associate it with being small, safe, sublime, pebbles, islands, sea, countryside. The country has over a thousand islands, 8 national parks, 11 nature parks, over 6,000 km of coastline and ten World Heritage sites. Yes, all that packed in one country the size of the state of Virginia!!

It is a truly fun destination with many adventure options for the clients who like active vacations. Also great for a family reunion in a beach front villa on the coast line of the Adriatic sea. Croatian adventure goes on land, sea, and rivers making it fun for whatever you want to do.

The destination is also for foodies and people that value high quality wines. Did you know that ZINFANDEL is originally from Croatia and that the biggest white truffle ever was found in Istria region in Croatia?

## ITALY UPDATE

*By Rick Steves, January 31, 2020*

(This article has been abbreviated to fit our newsletter, but we as always encourage you to book in advance for as many of the sights in Europe as possible, now this message comes directly from a travel guru!). **Let your Willamette agent help you book tours covering the major sights of Europe. Tour with a registered guide, such as those used by Context Travel.**

“The big news in European travel is that its tourist sites and popular cities are more crowded than ever — and that’s probably most true for Italy. With all the crowds heading for the same few attractions, popular sights and destinations are packed, and ticket lines are long.

Fortunately, Italy is better organized than ever for the huge crowds that descend on it each year — but only for those who equip themselves with good information and use it. As ever, my top tip for Italy is to book your sightseeing ahead of time as much as possible. Sure, this limits your spontaneity — but it’s a small price to pay for the extra time it gives you to relax in a café, take an evening stroll, or countless other activities more enjoyable than standing in interminable lines. It’s more important than ever to book ahead for big-time sights, most notably Rome’s Vatican Museums (home of the Sistine Chapel) and Florence’s Uffizi Gallery, Accademia (with Michelangelo’s David), and Duomo dome climb. (This is especially true for the Uffizi and Accademia, now that the

Firenze Card sightseeing pass no longer includes skip-the-line privileges at either museum.)”

## Raffaello at the Scuderie Del Quirinale

*For a limited time, from March 5 to June 2, 2020*

2020 will see a series of exhibitions and events in honor of Raphael, but the Rome retrospective at the Scuderie del Quirinale promises to be the show of the year. Curators and art historians have gathered over 200 works together for the first time to tell the story of Raphael and his impact on Renaissance art.

Tickets to this special exhibit will sell out fast. Context Travel will be offering small group tours with an Art Historian.

## Rome, Italy; from Our Friends at Context Travel:

One of the most common questions we get from travelers visiting Rome with kids is this: should we burn a full day of our trip to see Pompeii and Herculaneum? While Pompeii is a wonderful way to steep youngsters in the daily life of Ancient Rome, it’s a loooooong full-day investment (12 hours) from Rome, involving lots of time on trains (or in cars)—it’s truly better visited from Naples or Sorrento. With that in mind, we usually recommend a day trip from Rome to lesser-known Ostia Antica, the ancient port just 25 kilometers outside the city. Ostia offers a relatively uncrowded alternative.

Another reason we love Ostia is because it represents an outstanding example of a small, working-class Roman town, protected by millennia of river mud. Pompeii, by contrast, was a little more aristocratic—those who are able to visit both will come away with a wonderfully holistic view of the different tranches of Roman society. We recently visited Ostia Antica on one of our Ostia Archaeology excursions, with a few kids in tow. With few other visitors and plenty of warm, Roman sunshine, we were transported back 2000 years.

## Trevi Fountain Will Soon be Surrounded By a Barrier

Afar.com reports seven months after announcing a slew of rules targeted at regulating tourists’ bad behavior, Roman officials are taking things one step further at the landmark fountain. On January 23, 2020, Rome’s city council approved a resolution to place barriers around the famous Trevi Fountain to curb risky behaviors from tourists and to prevent people from sitting on the monument. The Telegraph reports that the motion, which calls for respect for the symbolic parts of Roma Capitale, passed almost unanimously. In a Facebook post, Rome mayor Virginia Raggi described the proposed barrier as being about three feet tall and made of glass and steel. She claims it will not obstruct the view of the monument.

# Europe

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## UNITED KINGDOM

### High Tea in London? Hotel Café Royal

Like stepping inside a jewel box, the gilded and mirrored Oscar Wilde Lounge in the Hotel Café Royal, is one of London's most idyllic settings for Afternoon Tea — a live pianist helps set the mood, too. That's not to say families would feel out of place here; in fact, we saw a few on our visit here; in fact well-behaved children just add to the charm. Fun fact: The room dates back to 1865; formerly known as the Grill Room, it was renamed in honor of the hotel's famous patron Oscar Wilde, though David Bowie and Mick Jagger also used to party in its former incarnation. The current menu is a tribute to one of the most beloved British monarchs, Queen Victoria, featuring dishes, ingredients and production techniques that came into fashion during her reign some 200 years ago. Think about having High Tea in place of dinner prior to going to the theater.

### Discover Britain's Best Kept Secret:

Bletchley Park, once the top-secret home of the World War II code breakers, gives you the chance to experience the stories of the extraordinary achievements of the men and women who worked here. A place of exceptional historical importance, it is also the birthplace of modern computing and has shaped life as we know it today. During your visit you'll see the restored code-breaking huts, with their WWII ambience faithfully recreated, plus a stunning new visitor center with an introductory exhibition and hands-on displays. Don't miss the new exhibition dubbed "D-Day: Interception, Intelligence, Invasion" and find out the vital role that the intelligence produced at Bletchley Park had on the invasion plans.

### The Making of Mr. Dickens:

With 2020 being the Year of the Bookworm, the cathedral city of Rochester in Kent and where Mr. Dickens resided (<http://gadshillplace.co.uk>) will be celebrating all things Dickens to commemorate 150 years since the death of one of England's greatest story tellers. Scheduled for June 13-14, the menu of events so far offers walking and open-top bus tours led by costumed Dickens characters, a poetry trail, costumed parades and street acts to competitions, readings and a fair. "The Making of Mr. Dickens," an exciting new permanent and immersive exhibition at the Guildhall Museum in Rochester will present a fascinating picture of the man behind the celebrity.

## FRANCE

*Update on Notre Dame; by The Associated Press, Jan. 22, 2020*

PARIS (AP) — The French army general in charge of rebuilding fire-ravaged Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris says renovation work will begin in earnest later this year. Gen. Jean-Louis Georgelin told a French parliament commission that workers are still securing the structure. Concerns persist that Notre Dame's vaulted ceilings could collapse.

"Even if we are rather confident and even if all the indicators seem positive, it is still too early to affirm that the cathedral is saved" he said. The April fire destroyed the landmark's spire and the roof that kept its twin-towered facade and ceilings stable.

The cathedral also has to be cleared of lead, and only then will experts be able to make decisions about how to rebuild Notre Dame. The reconstruction of Notre Dame, whose first stone was laid in 1163, has prompted widespread debate across France, with differing views over whether it should involve new technologies and designs.

### SUMMER OLYMPICS WILL BE IN PARIS 2024

This is going to mean a lot of urban renewal throughout Paris over the next 4 years. The years leading up to the Summer Olympics in London in 2012 totally changed the face of the East End of London. The dates are 02 August through to 18 August 2024. Space will be at a premium! This may be a good reason to add Paris to your travel plans before August, 2024!

### Wander Père-Lachaise Cemetery

Spring is an evocative time to stroll Paris's famous cemetery Père-Lachaise, the city's largest, established in 1864. Head east to the 20th, where the 110-acre sanctuary is home to legends of music, literature, and art. The illustrious list of those buried here includes singers Édith Piaf and Maria Callas, and playwrights Oscar Wilde and Molière. Writers Proust, Balzac and Colette, composer Chopin, artist Modigliani and mime Marcel Marceau also rest among the magnificent monuments. You'll usually spy Doors fans hanging out by the grave of American rock star Jim Morrison. Request a map on entry or download one in advance. 16 Rue du Repos, 75020.

Sign up for the Willamette blog through our website: <http://www.wittravel.com>

# International News

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## EGYPT

Later this year, as the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM), the largest collection in the world of a single civilization's artifacts, opens to the public near the pyramids of Giza. The vast 5.2-million-square-foot museum will house more than 100,000 objects, including 30,000 that have never been exhibited before. Highlighted will be the entire 5,000-piece funerary collection of King Tutankhamun, including his sandals, chariot, and cheetah-skin shield – the first time in history that the full collection will be on display.

While no date has been set for the grand opening, it is nearing completion! Many believe that the GEM's singular and unique collection, with its close proximity to the pyramids, will bring first-time tourists, as well as encourage return visitors.

To reconfirm that Egypt is one of the world's up and coming destinations here is a client's report on her December, 2019, trip with Viking River Cruises to Egypt:

“Hi Pam and Happy New Year,

I have been meaning to write and tell you how much we enjoyed the trip to Cairo and down the Nile. I would say it will always be one of the trips that will hold the most memories. It was beautiful and magical, and your recommendations were spot on regarding what to do and what to not do. There was so much to take in that I feel as though I could go back and do the whole trip over again. Our guides were outstanding, knowledgeable, engaging, and most of all so real and authentic, so wanting us to appreciate their country — true ambassadors in their own right

For what it's worth, we found the pacing created for this Viking tour very busy but also well-balanced. I would say that my favorite part was Abu Simbel, and I am so glad that you encouraged us to see this. If ever a place brought the concepts of permanence and impermanence together this was it. My sense of time is changed forever.

Perhaps it is always the luck of the draw, but our guides, the other travelers, the weather — all was just incredible. In spite of both of us being ill by the time we arrived home, I would do it again in a heartbeat. Thank you so so much for your patience and for all of your help.” — Mary C. King

## MOROCCO

Like Egypt we are getting a lot of requests for travel to Morocco. We believe this will be a hot destination in 2020 on into 2021. Two of the distinct experiences in Morocco are those of the intricate cities and the expansive desert. The old cities (medinas) of the imperial capitals like Fes and Marrakech are intense, sensual places, where daily life pushes through narrow streets and cool palaces hide behind

mysterious portals. The Sahara Desert is endless sand and sky, uncomplicated but powerful. Somewhere between the extremes are the earthy Kasbahs, direct and formidable. With so much contrast, a week or two in Morocco can feel like a trip around the world and back, in a good way!

Those that attended our Open House on December 7, 2019, met Ronen owner of YALLA TOURS who specializes in Israel, Egypt, Morocco and other areas of the Middle East. If Egypt or Morocco are on your wish list, now is the time to go. Yalla can create special interest itineraries as well as general touring. Egypt is pretty much sold out for 2020, but we are still finding space if you can be flexible with your dates. Best time to visit either destination would be spring or fall. Let us use our expertise to create a very memorable trip for you.

## AUSTRALIA UPDATE

One of our staff's favorite spots in Australia is Kangaroo Island, which was impacted badly by the bushfires. After such a disaster there are always the questions like “how much wildlife is left” or “if we go, will we be in the way of the recovery”. Here is the latest from the Australian Tourism Board. YES, it is still worth adding this unique island to your Australian itinerary.

Kangaroo Island is a big island. While the sad reality is that a lot of wildlife living in the west end perished, there is a substantial amount of wildlife and habitats left to thrive. You will see magnificent wedge tailed eagles, playful dolphins (that you can swim with), koalas, kangaroos, wallabies, echidnas, goannas and more. Kangaroo Island is a mecca for wildlife and you'll most definitely be able to see a lot in the wild, as well as at family friendly parks like Raptor Domain, KI Wildlife Park, KI Outdoor Action, KI Marine Adventures and KI Ocean Safaris. Willamette will book you with one of the local tour operators, who will be able to show you parts of the island that are not accessible to the public; you can walk among habitats and ecosystems unlike anywhere else in the world.

The loss of loved ones, wildlife, stock and property is devastating, and our sympathies are extended to all who have experienced this tragedy. Kangaroo Island's biggest industries are tourism and agriculture, both of which have been substantially impacted by the fires. Tourism is also important to the Adelaide Hill's economy. Given the importance of tourism, the industry and the locals are campaigning together to encourage people to plan and visit. Every dollar spent in these communities is pumped back into their economy and keeps them afloat. They are sending the message loud and clear: “YES, PLEASE COME AND VISIT”. Also, include New South Wales, Victoria and other parts of Australia. Remember, it is a year-round destination.



# Viking Cruises

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*An Invitation From Willamette Intl. Travel & Viking Cruises  
to Attend Our Annual*

## VIKING CRUISE EVENING

*Hosted by John Jerkovich*

*PNW Sales Manager for Viking Cruises*

### WHAT IS THE VIKING DIFFERENCE?

*Culturally enriching. Carefully curated.*

- Viking does not charge for its alternative restaurants
- Destination focused with a tour included at each port
- Unlimited free Wi-Fi
- 24-hour room service
- Beer, wine & soft drinks with onboard lunch & dinner
- 24-hour specialty coffees
- Self-service laundrettes
- Port taxes & fees including in the cabin price

### WHERE DO THEY GO?

*To 455 cities in 106 Countries!*

Come learn about new destinations including their  
Exploration Cruises to ARTIC AND ANTARCTIC  
STARTING IN 2021

#### WHEN

Thursday, April 30, 2020 | 6:00 p.m.

#### WHERE

Willamette Intl Travel Office  
1314 NW Irving Street, Suite 101, Portland

#### RSVP

Call 503-224-0180 to RSVP, or email to  
enquiry@wittravel.com by Friday, April 24.

*Viking does not try to be all things to all people*  
— which means they can focus on delivering  
especially meaningful experiences to you!

- No Casinos
- No children under 18
- No umbrella drinks
- No photographers
- No art auctions
- No inside Staterooms
- No smoking
- No formal nights
- **No nickel & diming!**



# Domestic

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## SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Most visitors will walk past 109 E. Palace in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and have no idea that they are passing the site that once served as Robert Oppenheimer's office. In the courtyard of a gift shop decorated with colorful ceramic frogs and dragonflies, it's easy to overlook the historic marker. Perhaps that's fitting for a secret site. In the early 1940s, the world's top scientists and their families trudged through this patio, bedraggled from a cross-country train trip. Most didn't know where they were headed. All they had were classified orders to report to the address "109 East Palace, Santa Fe, New Mexico". When they opened the wrought iron gate, they entered what the National Historical Landmark plaque calls a "portal to their secret mission", which was to build the atomic bomb.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

Labyrinthine and extensive, LACMA is one of the more comprehensive art museums in the world. The campus is huge, so expect to walk, a lot. There are galleries for permanent collections on art from North America, Korea, Japan, Latin America, the Islamic world, and Europe, the latter which includes paintings from masters like Matisse, Magritte, Picasso, and Rembrandt. It's also known for its temporary exhibitions of blockbuster shows. (courtesy of Conde Naste)

## SANTA MONICA FARMERS MARKET

The Los Angeles area is famous for having a farmers market every day of the week, and the Santa Monica Farmers Market, held on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, is the mother of them all. Taking up several city blocks, the market is lined with seasonal fruits, vegetables, and other products and provisions. There are some remarkable splurge items that you won't find other farmers markets; for instance, black truffles, bergamot, emu eggs, and sea urchin. (Courtesy of Conde Naste)

## NAPA CALIFORNIA

DoNapa.com is a one-stop spot for all the things you can do in Napa Valley, California. And one of the most popular and romantic activities currently available is a Venetian gondola ride. Gondola Servizio, a company that provides gondola cruises on Lake Merritt in Oakland, has been offering their specialty boat rides down the Napa River since 2018. Guests can enjoy the gorgeous Napa Valley scenery while cruising down the river. To make it feel even more special, they can also bring a bottle of wine to share on the ride. Plus, the gondoliers at Gondola Servizio will point out interesting features along the river or historical facts while you ride.

## Legoland, New York

New York is finally getting its very own Legoland, the third in the US. It intends to open in Goshen on July 4. The park will be 150 acres, with seven lands and 50 rides and attractions.

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

As February is Black History Month, it may be a good time to think about visiting this Museum. Inaugurated in November 2016, this Smithsonian museum in Washington is the "only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African-American life, history, and culture. Objects on display include Chuck Berry's Cadillac, Harriet Tubman's prayer shawl, and protest signs from the Black Lives Matter movement. The Sweet Home Café in the museum showcases some of the stories and themes of the rest of the museum, giving visitors a taste of traditional meals from the diaspora. Taste spicy oxtail pepperpot or savor sweet potato pie.

## SEATTLE

Seattle's National Nordic Museum is a nominee for the Best New Museum award! Founded in 1980, the new exhibit for the National Nordic Museum opened in the Ballard neighborhood of Seattle, Washington in May 2018. The museum shares Nordic history and culture from over 12,000 years through exhibitions of art and objects, preserved collections, and powerful educational and engaging experiences. The exhibition honors five different Nordic nations, including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Incorporating Nordic designs with a main hall resembling a fjord using narrowing walls, the building itself delivers a true Nordic experience as guests explore the museum.

## ARIZONA

There's a new USS Arizona Memorial in the States—but it's not in Hawaii, it's in Arizona. The Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community (SRPMIC), located near Scottsdale, Arizona, is proud to announce the public opening of the USS Arizona Memorial Gardens at Salt River next month on February 22, 2020. The USS Arizona Memorial Gardens at Salt River honors the brave individuals that served aboard the USS Arizona that sank on December 7, 1941, during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

# Hawaii

## HAWAIIAN-GROWN INGREDIENTS

A lot can be learned about a destination and its culture simply by examining the flora thriving within it and how residents incorporate much of it into their everyday lives. The Hawaiian Islands are no different. There are indeed many Hawaii-grown ingredients that, for those in-the-know, are identifiably indicative of local culture. Incorporated into everything from delectable culinary creations to health-beneficial products, the four Hawaii-grown ingredients below are much-used and much-loved by local residents, and just might make fans of your clients, too.

**1) Ginger.** Known as **awapuhi** in the Hawaiian language, the ginger plant's significance in local culture is manifold, ranging from the many culinary uses of its root to the stringing of its fragrant blossoms in lei. You can quench your thirst with a can of Maui Brewing Co.'s Island Ginger Beer, crafted with locally sourced cane sugar, honey and, of course, fresh ginger.

**2) Coffee.** Coffee is commercially grown in Hawaii on five islands. Suggest your clients sample the international-award-winning coffee grown and roasted in the island of Hawaii's southeast Kau district, including java from Kau Coffee Mill, which offers a free farm tour daily. On Kauai, explore Kauai Coffee's vast coffee farm, the largest in the United States, via open-air truck and learn about its bean-to-cup growing and roasting process

**3) Passionfruit.** More commonly known in the Hawaiian Islands as **lilikoi**, the tangy tropical fruit has worked its way from the vine into a profusion of inspired local dishes. Foodie clients seeking new, exciting adventure in flavor will want to sample the taste of sweet, tart lilikoi among the smoky, savory barbecue sauces for grilled eats at Kiawe Roots on Kauai.

To taste passionfruit at its local sweetest, suggest clients on Oahu head to Senia for the restaurant's lilikoi souffle cheesecake. On the island of Hawaii, the from-scratch graham cracker crust and fresh passionfruit worked into Foster's Kitchen's lilikoi cheesecake sends diner taste buds to new heights in passionfruit flavor. Thirsty? Imagined by its Maui-resident bartenders, Vana Paia restaurant's High Tide cocktail combines lilikoi, pineapple and a base of Martinique-crafted rum for fresh, bright flavor.



**4) Taro.** Called **kalo** in the Hawaiian language, taro is the main of two ingredients – the other being water – used to make one of Hawaii's most well-known local delicacies, poi. As Native Hawaiians believe a kinship exists between people and the natural world, kalo and its cultivation practices have been valued and perpetuated in Hawaii for generation upon generation. If your Oahu-bound clients wish to immerse in traditional Hawaiian culture and farming practices, nonprofit cultural organizations Hookuaaina and Hooulu Aina offer volunteer opportunities to plant and care for kalo, and learn about its origins and significance to Hawaiian culture.

## FIRST ALL INCLUSIVE HOTEL ON ISLAND OF LANAI

November 2019, saw the opening of the Four Seasons Hotel Lanai at Koele, a Sensei Retreat, high in the island's pine-clad mountains. The brand's sophomore Lanai property is all-inclusive and focuses exclusively on wellness retreats, with bespoke programming that includes fitness classes, yoga and meditation, as well as island activities.

A great combo would be to spend a few nights at the Koele retreat then head to the original beach front Four Seasons Lanai and enjoy amenities such as the adults-only resort pool area, which has cabana cocoons and rock grottoes. Take a catamaran from the resort with the chance to see humpback whales breaching in the horizon. Are you planning for a very special occasion?



*REMEMBER UNCRUISE now sail the Hawaiian Islands year round. Their shore excursions are unique, taking you into off-beat parts of the Island and deep into the culture. Many of the Willamette Staff have been aboard UnCruise and would love to share their individual experience.*

# Avanti Destinations

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Many staff members at Willamette have traveled to South American countries. Let us put our first hand knowledge along with Avanti Destinations knowledge to create your personal trip to this continent that offers unique experiences. **A few examples to consider:**



## **PERUVIAN BLISS**

***Lima, Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu, Cusco & Máncora Beach***

Explore the scenic highlands of Peru. Visit the Sacred Valley of the Inca's and immerse yourself in the rich cultural history of Peru. Take the Vistadome train to Machu Picchu to explore these famous ruins. Finish your adventure with two days on one of Peru's most beautiful beaches.

## **TASTES OF THE PACIFIC COAST AND THE GALAPAGOS:**

***Bucay, Puerto Cayo, Guayaquil & the Galapagos***

Immerse yourself in the ultimate holiday by experiencing two diverse destinations. First, savor the culinary pleasures of Ecuador's pacific coast, sampling gastronomic dishes amid the tranquil settings of haciendas and resorts. You'll participate in a hands-on cooking class resulting in your own culinary creation. Next, take a mystical journey to the Galapagos Islands, offering wildlife and landscapes found nowhere else on earth. Experience nature's living laboratory on a cruise viewing tortoises and a variety of bird life, or opt for an island hopping program.

## **THE AMAZON REGION; SANI LODGE, ECUADOR**

Ideal for large families, Sani Lodge is a community project owned and run 100% by the indigenous community. Dive into the Ecuadorian nature at a tribal-inspired eco-resort and uncover the mysteries of the rainforest alongside expert guides.

## **PATAGONIA EXPLORER: NEW VENTUS & STELLA AUSTRALIS CRUISES**

***Santiago, Patagonia, Calafate & Buenos Aires***

Combine the culture and sophistication of two South American capitals with the rugged beauty of adventurous Patagonia. Explore the remote, spectacular landscape of Patagonia, a nature lover's paradise shared by Chile and Argentina at the southern tip of the Americas. Centuries ago, this was the end of the known world. You'll never forget the sights here; jaw-droppingly beautiful mountains, calving glaciers, turquoise lakes and abundant wildlife. This adventure in the wild is bookended by stays in two of South America's most fascinating cities, Santiago and Buenos Aires. Truly, the trip of a lifetime



# Holland America

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**Holland America Line®**  
SAVOR THE JOURNEY

For almost 145 years Holland America has watched the power and transformation that tourism creates. Traveling broadens your mind and reveals the shared humanity that connects us throughout the world.



**FOR OVER 70 YEARS, HOLLAND AMERICA HAS BEEN ENAMORED WITH ALASKA.**

It's easy to witness their adoration through the ways they have embraced the Pacific Northwest. Their ships have been designed to bring you closer to Alaska's natural wonders. Places like Glacier Bay National Park, the glaciers of College Fjord, Hubbard Glacier, and Twin Sawyer Glaciers of Tracy Arm are just the tip of the iceberg of the exciting experiences that await you.

Immerse yourself in your Alaskan journey with an award-winning beer from the Alaskan Brewing Company and savor every bite of your perfectly cooked piece of Salmon. Step off the beaten path by adding the Yukon's wild frontier to your Alaska cruise. Expand your mind and reunite with nature, you can't go wrong.

In fact, Holland America will be announcing a brand-new offer the first week of March, 2020 that might be perfect for you. Make sure to contact your travel agent at Willamette International Travel at **503- 224- 0180** to find out more details.

# Please Join Us

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*Invitation to an*

## AFRICAN AFTERNOON

*Mark your Calendars for Sunday, June 7.*

Peter's visit to the USA this June will be a bitter-sweet one. For the last couple of years Peter has collaborated with Larry Broutman, (a lifelong Chicagoan, a professor, an entrepreneur, a world-wide explorer, as well as a nature & wildlife photographer & author) on a book now in print called "African Treasure". The book was released last October, just before Larry's untimely death on 11 December 2019. Peter will be here to discuss the making of the book, the journeys around Kenya he took with Larry including remote Lake Turkana in Northern Kenya.

A personal invite has been sent to client's who have traveled in Kenya with Peter as a guide. Those who traveled with us & Peter in 2013 will remember returning to the USA and the drive to collect over 700 pairs of ladies underclothing which Peter distributed through his charity Nyashep Education Trust to keep young girls in school 4 weeks out of the month!

Space will be limited, our office can hold around 35 to 40. If you are interested in meeting Peter, learn about his life as a Professional Safari Guide (KPSGA), and his involvement in trying to bring quality high school & college education to young people in Kenya rsvp to me now.

### WHEN

Sunday, June 7, 2020 | 2–4 p.m.

### WHERE

Willamette Intl Travel Office

### GUEST

Peter Liech, one of our main safari guides  
visiting from Kenya.

### RSVP

christinac@wittravel.com

Peter & Larry's book can be purchased online at  
<https://www.chicagolighthouseclocks.com>

All proceeds go to Chicago Lighthouse a social  
service organization serving the blind of Chicago.

If you do purchase the book bring it with you on 07  
June and Peter will happily sign it for you.

## *What You Say About Your Visit To East Africa*

*Last September, 16 of us traveled to Kenya, on the same itinerary that we will repeat September 2020. It was an amazing group and trip. Peter was one of our three guides. Following are comments from Doug & Diane DuFresne regarding last year's trip. A story of two days on Safari.*

We made a long drive to the Mara River to see a Wildebeest crossing. Often seeing only an occasional Warthog, no grazers despite the tall grass. Other areas had Wildebeest in the thousands. On one of these well populated plains we came across a Hyena Den with cubs. As we watched the adults suddenly left loping towards where Vultures were circling. We followed finding the carcass of a Wildebeest, and dozens of hyenas all feasting. There was infighting including chasing the Vultures away. On our last day as we headed to the airstrip we saw two Towers of Giraffe, 12 in each, and a hippo far from water. Just before arriving at the airstrip the guides got a message of a Lion sighting. Fortunately, we had time to watch. Our guides parked in the perfect spot with the Lions

heading toward us. One male decided to mark his territory in front of our vehicle, then he stretched out using the side of the vehicle below my window for shade. I could have put my hand out to stroke him! It was a memorable Grand Finale to our safari trip.

Kenya: In addition to our 3 wonderful guides, we found the Kenyan people to be very warm and friendly. Nairobi: highlights were getting up close to the baby elephants (Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage) - too special - and to the giraffes (Giraffe Center). Our safari vehicles and the rotation: John was the best commander of the fleet. Brilliant idea to set assignments each day. This helped to get to know all the other tour members and each guide better. Everyone had something to offer that enhanced the trip.

Summary: We understand why you continue to go back to Africa. We didn't think any trip could beat our 2015 Africa trip — this one did, even if it didn't have any meerkats

# Willamette Escorted Tours

## Kenya - September 12–25, 2020

Call Christina for full details.

Date/Day	Activities/Travel
Sept. 12	Arrival into Nairobi. Meet on arrival and transfer to House of Waine in Karen for 2 nights.
Sept. 13	After breakfast we'll spend a full day exploring Karen Blixen Museum, Kuzuri Beads Factory, and the Giraffe Center, ending up at the Sheldrick Elephant Orphanage for a private visit.
Sept. 14-17	Over good roads we will head north to Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. This is a Rhino Sanctuary so we will be assured of seeing rhino on one of our game drives. We will also see animals unique to Northern Kenya including Grevy's zebra. On past visits we have also seen cheetahs, lions and leopards, the latter usually on our sundowner trips. During our time here we will also visit the Primary School that Christina and John have supported for over a decade.
Sept. 17-19	After breakfast we will take a short 2 hour drive to Samburu Game Reserve to one of our favorite camps, Elephant Bedroom, situated right on the river banks. The camp is unfenced and an elephant right of way to the river! We will see the rest of the North's unique animals, the Reticulated Giraffe, Somali Ostrich, Gerenuk, Guenther's Dik-Dik and the Beisa Oryz.
Sept. 19-21	Our Origin's Guides will leave us on the afternoon of the 19th, deadheading to the Mara. Staff at Elephant Bedroom will take us to the airport strip after breakfast for our flight to the Mara. We are splitting the Mara stay into two different areas. Kichwa Tembo will be our home for the next 2 nights. The air strip is close to the camp and camp staff will meet us on arrival. Our Origin's guide will be with us in the afternoon. By splitting our 5 night stay into 2 locations, we are maximizing our chances of seeing the migration herds.
Sept. 21-24	A full day drive through the Mara to Mara Ngenche in a totally different part of the Mara, and perhaps our all-time favorite camp there. It has an excellent location on the bed of the river overlooking a hippo pool. BE WARNED they do wander the camp at night – looking for food! This area affords magnificent viewing and on past trips we have been lucky to see the migration as well as cheetahs, lions and even leopards.
Sept. 24	Early morning game drive is possible. Our flight to Nairobi leaves around 11am. On arrival Wilson Field Karen we will be taken to Four Points Sheraton at the Nairobi airport where day rooms & dinner will be provided.
Sept. 25	Return to Nairobi.

## Namibia – August 14–30, 2020

Call for details. At this time we have sold 10 of the 12 spots. *Please call regarding the final 2 spots and the pricing.*

Date/Day	Activities/Travel
Days 1-2	Arrival Walvis Bay – 2 nights Strand Hotel Swakopmund
Days 3-5	FLY Hoanib Valley Camp – Sesfontein Conservancy
Days 6-7	Fly to Anderssons Camo, southern boundary of Etosha National Park. Meet up with our Ultimate Guides.
Days 8-10	Drive to Onguma, spend 3 nights at the Fort, Eastern boundary of Etosha.
Days 11-12	Drive to Divava River Lodge, Mahango Game Reserve
Days 13-14	Drive to Nambwa Tented Camp, Bwabwata National Park
Days 15-16	Drive to Kasane & Chobe National Park 2 nights at Chobe River Lodge. Can be extended to 3 nights.
Day 17	Departure from Kasane airport Botswana.

Our 2019 safari was very successful. Our 2 guides Alpha & Richard truly made the trip with their knowledge, their humor and their willingness to answer our many questions. We did change the ending, so we are staying on the Chobe River, on the Botswana side and adjacent to Chobe National Park, which will make the arrival and departure easier and more relaxing.

# Client Reports

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## DRIVING TRIP THROUGH SOUTHERN ITALY

**Ben & Kristan Sias – September , 2019**

We started our trip with a few nights in Naples, at the Best Western Paradiso, which was very nice. It sits way up high on a hill that has spectacular views of Mt. Vesuvius, the Mediterranean, the old fort and part of the city. It has a very nice restaurant and a great breakfast. At the bottom of the hill there is a nice wide walking and biking path along the bay all the way to the main part of the city.

The boat taxi to Sorrento was quite enjoyable. The hotel, La Casa Del Orologio, was nice and has a very friendly staff. Unfortunately, it is right on the main square that had many restaurants with outdoor sitting, which makes it very noisy. It is tolerable if the windows are kept closed. The gentleman you chose for our tour of the Amalfi coast was really friendly and knowledgeable (Michele from Bella Amalfi Tours). It was great to have him drive us around the various towns. The traffic along that road was insane, and the towns were very crowded, even in early October. In our opinion, perhaps the boat tour to the villages would have been more enjoyable, although you wouldn't have a chance to visit Ravello at the very top, which we really liked. We also took a boat trip around the island of Capri, taking a long walk around the east side of the island along a path that had spectacular views.

Then we picked up the car and headed south. Maratea is a very quiet, authentic Italian coastal town. It has a nice beach and the old part of the town is very enjoyable to walk through. The hotel, B&B La Torretta, is in Cersuta, about 5 miles north of Maratea. It was very quiet and the woman and her husband who own it are very nice. Even better, the best restaurant in the area, Da Cesarean, was only a quarter mile walk away. Fantastic fish dishes.

Next we went to Tropea. The hotel, La Dolce Vita, was fantastic. It sits right on the cliff in the old part of town overlooking the Mediterranean, with a fantastic view of the Santuario di Santa Maria. The beaches in Tropea are beautiful with great swimming and an easy walk to access. There a lot of nice restaurants in town as well. I can why this town can get very crowded in the summer.

We then headed back north to the mountain town of Castelmezzano, which sits right in the middle of Italy between Naples on the west coast and Bari on the east coast. It is a fantastic little town built right into the hillside. You need to park outside the town and walk everywhere, which makes

it very quiet and enjoyable. Once again, the hotel, Il Borgo Ducale, was great. The view from there is fantastic, especially at night with the lights shining on the cliffs around the town.

On to the fascinating town of Matera, where people have lived in caves with their sheep for centuries, up until the 1950's. It was called "The Shame of Italy" because these living conditions, which the Italian leaders found appalling when they first visited the town after WWII. Now the caves are being renovated into fancy little boutique hotels and restaurants. The hotel, Hotel Le Malle, is in a great location right near one of the main attractions in the old town, the Sasso Caveoso. We liked our room, but it was damp. There is great walking all through the old town, and fun exploring some of the old remaining caves. On the weekends it is extremely crowded now, and it is difficult to get reservations for dinner. Best to get there now, before it becomes like the Amalfi coast.

Our final destination in Southern Italy was Martina Franca. It is an interesting area with very nice villages known for the Trulli's, the cone shaped stone rooftops. Locorotondo and Alberobello are extremely enjoyable to walk through. The hotel, Il Carpino Vacanze, was actually an old farm that has been renovated to accommodate five units. The owner is the granddaughter of the original owners and is working hard to run it as a hotel. I'm glad the units have kitchens, because there are no restaurants nearby. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to entice tourists to stay in the country. The roads are very narrow, making driving a bit challenging, especially at night because there are no streetlights. And it is easy to get lost, because road signage is sparse. We drove around the area and there are a lot of interesting things to see. The town of Grottaglie, a bit south of Martina Franca, is known for its pottery, and The Grotte di Castellano north of Martina Franca has a fantastic mile-long cave full of beautiful stalactites and stalagmites. We went to the beach town of Polignano a Mare, about 45 minutes from Martina Franca on the Adriatic. It has a very picturesque old town to walk through and a very nice swimming beach although it is quite small and must get very crowded in the summer.

Overall, it was a great trip and a very interesting area to explore. The accommodations were great. Thanks again for all your work finding them.

*(Note: Ben & Kristan are right this area should be explored now before it is truly discovered. The hotels are charming and well-priced. It is truly a sleeper.)*

LEAVE YOUR FEEDBACK ON OUR YELP PAGE.

<http://www.yelp.com/biz/willamette-international-travel-portland>



# Emerging International Destinations

## ANCIENT CULTURES – ARMENIA & GEORGIA

History happens in Republic Square... This was the hub of Armenia's Velvet Revolution last spring and a good place to begin your exploration of Yerevan, the country's vibrant capital.

There is compelling evidence that wine production in the Caucasus goes back 8,000 years; experience these ancient traditions visiting Armenian and Georgian wine estates and tasting their fine vintages.

Regarded as the world's oldest Christian lands, you can explore the two ancient monasteries where Armenia and Georgia adopted the new religion early in the 4th century. Visit the National Museum in Tbilisi with a curator who will help you to understand and appreciate Georgia's rich history, from its founding days to the Soviet occupation and the present day.

- Participate in hands-on cooking classes in Armenia and Georgia to get to know their rich culinary heritage.
- Visit the cave monastery at Vardzia, built 1,000 years ago by the legendary Queen Tamar. With 400 rooms, a dozen churches and 20 wine cellars, this ancient Holy City was once home to an estimated 2,000 monks.
- Dine with a Georgian family for an authentic taste of daily life in the Caucasus.
- Meet the Khevsur in their remote mountain village outside of Kazbegi... Legend has it that they're descended from Western European Crusaders who wandered lost in Central Asia centuries ago!

*Escorted tours to these unique countries are offered by two of our favorite vendors; Alexander & Roberts; Caravan-Serai. **Visit before they are truly discovered.***

## EXPEDITION CRUISE; SCOTLAND SLOWLY

Mainland Scotland has been a staple on most visits to the United Kingdom. However, the Scottish Islands not so as travel to them is difficult at best. This cruise is all about the islands;

**Departure June 14, 2021 from Glasgow, Ending in Aberdeen.** A slow & easy cruise visiting Islay: Iona; Staffa; St Kilda; Lewis; Orkney Islands; Shetland Islands & Fair Isle:

Yes, these are "emerging destinations" and this one only sailing allows you to visit all from the comfort of your expedition cruise ship, "Ocean Endeavor." With room for just 198 guests, this will sell out quickly.

- Book with us before 31 May 2020 and save 15%
- Plus limited cabins offered with no single supplement.

This cruise offers a glimpse of Scottish island life, where crofters and fisherfolk live close to the sea.

- Visit Scotland's farthest-flung islands
- Make landings by Zodiac in places otherwise inaccessible to visitors.
- History and archaeology — everywhere!
- History buffs will wander wide-eyed in Scotland. From Neolithic villages to medieval castles, Scotland is a living testament to a rich and layered history
- Visit archeological ruins including standing stones, brochs, ancient complexes, and castles
- English, Scots, Norse, Pictish, and Neolithic cultures all made their mark in Scotland



## Astounding sea life

Scotland's rocky coastlines attract millions of seabirds, including puffins — and the rich waters of the North Atlantic and North Sea are favored by numerous species of whales.

Spring conditions are excellent for viewing seabirds and spotting marine mammals

## Fine Scotch straight from the source

Small distilleries are famed the world over as some of Scotland's most enduring attractions. Among the islands, where fresh water and characteristic peat are found in plenty, numerous Scotch distillers ply their unique trade. Visit distilleries dating to the 1700s, and sample their glorious fare!

*These far flung islands have been impossible to visit in one itinerary unless one had a lot of time. They are sleepers, but now you can visit all without unpacking, taking your transportation with you.*

# Travel Tips

## CORONAVIRUS & TRAVEL INSURANCE:

With the coronavirus outbreak in China drawing concern from North American consumers and shuttering local tourist sites, Stan Sandberg, co-founder of TravelInsurance.com, has provided some answers to frequently asked questions regarding the outbreak and travel insurance:

**Is it Possible to Claim for a Trip Cancelled in Fear of the Coronavirus?** Unfortunately, an outbreak of a virus/disease is a not covered reasons under travel insurance plans for trip cancellation purposes. For those who purchased a Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) optional upgrade, however, some measure of trip cancellation protection may be available.

**Is Trip Protection Available Should Sickness Occur While Traveling?** If someone with a travel insurance plan gets sick while traveling, they could have benefits under the trip interruption coverage and the emergency medical coverage. The emergency medical coverage in a travel insurance plan could provide reimbursement for medical expenses incurred during the trip. If someone waits to see a doctor or go to the hospital until after their trip has ended, then the travel insurance plan would not pay a benefit, as it only covers expenses incurred during the trip.

**Comment from Willamette:** All insurance claims are very individual, but documentation is key when submitting your claim. We cannot stress enough that if you get sick while on a trip, you must visit a doctor or hospital in your locale. They are the ones who decide, after conferring with the Insurance Company here in the USA, whether it is essential for you to return to the USA for treatment.

## WWW.NANNYBAG.COM

Nannybag is a collaborative network that allows travellers to store their luggage in partner shops and hotels around the world. This is a relatively new company. Looking at their website for around the Amsterdam airport, most storage spots are in retail stores, and most were approximately 5 to 10 km from the airport. This could be a back up for short time storage, but would require taxi round trip from the airport. Check first to see if the stopover airport offers a Baggage Storage office located on the premises.

On Christina's recent trip through Amsterdam, she did some scouting and there is a Baggage Storage office close to Departure Terminals 1 & 3. Also, at London Heathrow there are Baggage Storage offices at each Terminal. They are always located on airport premises, but outside the secure area. All are clearly marked.

## TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

This Good Housekeeping article lists 36 tips that may help make your next family trip easier to handle!

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a30317914/how-to-travel-with-kids>

## THE REAL DEAL ABOUT REAL ID

The **Real ID Act** is a set of federal standards that states must follow for their driver licenses and ID cards to be accepted for certain federal purposes, such as flying within the U.S. or entering secure federal facilities. Some federal agencies are prevented from accepting IDs not meeting these standards. BUT CAN I get on an airplane now? Yes! Your current Oregon driver license or ID card is still good to board flights within the U.S. **However, beginning October 1, 2020, Oregonians will need a Real ID card or other federally approved form of ID to board a flight or enter secure federal facilities.**

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Forms/DMV/7476.pdf>

Our advice to all is for you to immediately apply for a U.S. passport, and also pay the extra fee to also get the Passport Card. The latter can be used for travel within the U.S.A. Once you have a valid passport, we would love to help you plan your first international trip!

## ANSWERING SERVICE

**Emails are not monitored outside regular office hours. If you have emergency, please call 503-224-0180 or 1-800-821-0401.**

Remember, we are always available to help you if there is an emergency. Do not call any other number outside of regular hours, it will bypass the answering service and will go un-answered.

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# Staff Reports

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## **WINDSTAR “STAR PRIDE” CRUISE FROM PANAMA CITY TO COSTA RICA**

**By**

Last December I got the opportunity to take a week-long cruise on the lovely Windstar “Star Pride” from Panama City to Costa Rica. It was my first time in Panama and my second time experiencing Costa Rica. I spend the night prior to the cruise at the AC Hotel in Panama City. On the drive from the airport to the hotel, I was able to enjoy the beautiful Christmas lights around the City.

Check in for the cruise was a breeze. On the transport to the cruise there was a tour guide who told us historical anecdotes about Panama as we made our way to the port in Colon. Check in is very personal as you go through the line you meet different members of the crew and are told of the amenities offered during the cruise. Arriving at my suite, I was greeted by a staff member who showed me around my cabin which was much bigger than I expected.

That evening, on the top deck we attended a meet and greet cocktail party as the ship set sail. The crew raised an impressive display of flags but my favorite memory about this first evening was the sunset, it was breath taking. Then to dinner to experience my first meal. The food and the wait staff were delightful throughout the week.

During the week-long cruise we stopped in Balboa, Isla Parida where we had an island BBQ while we snorkeled and played in the water, and Quepos before ending the cruise in Puerto Caldera, Costa Rica. One of the highlights of the cruise for me was taking the Tropical Gardens tour in Quepos where I got to see sloths, and also went dolphin watching. There was always something to do while on the Star Pride and so many tour options that offered something for every type of traveler. In the evenings they have relaxing live music and fun events in the Compass Rose bar like salsa night and the crew talent show.

For many of the guests the main reason for taking this cruise was to experience going through the Panama Canal aboard a smaller ship. After my experience I think this should be on everyone’s bucket list. Windstar showed a great documentary of the making of Panama Canal during the cruise.

Not only was this adventure full of nature experiences but also extremely educational. This was my very first time on a cruise and I can say it will not be my last. I loved the size of Windstar, and their staff members were so impressive and hospitable. Overall an amazing experience for this first-time cruiser. I would love to answer any questions about Windstar, Panama or about Costa Rica.

## **SWITZERLAND**

**By Lindsay Nichols**

*Lindsay was invited by the Swiss Tourist Board & Swiss Rail on a week’s long trip last December. This is a very abbreviated report, Lindsay would LOVE to discuss her experience with anyone heading to Switzerland.*

Tucked away from the train station is Hotel Romantik, the only 5 star hotel in the Junfrau region. The name speaks for itself; with a Christmas tree outside and white lights lining the entire wooden structure, it definitely sets the tone for romance. You walk in and immediately experience the sound of soft jazz, a warm fireplace and a grand piano sitting at the entry way and of course decked out in Christmas beauty. Dinner was in the restaurant, it’s a quaint dining area with different pockets for private groups and we are seated in the center of the restaurant. The service was wonderful, and the food did not disappoint. Everyone was anxious to get back to their spacious suites to enjoy a massive tub. I had a balcony that walked out to shared balcony where the moonlit mountains surrounded us, it was gorgeous!

The next day our guide Sandra took us to explore Jungfrauoch, the tallest peak in the Jungfrau region, just under 4000m. There is a research station at the top focusing on human health and climate change along with a massive decorated Christmas tree that was strapped to the side of the railings, blowing in the strong gusts of wind. We toured the ice caves that were carved out in early 1900s, then had lunch at the top including fondue and other classics which were reasonably priced. I was again impressed with the food and service was excellent.

From there we went to Wengen for the afternoon, one of the car-free towns in Switzerland. In the valley below is Lauterbraun, where it stays dark all day at certain times of year due to the mountains surrounding them. The train station is in the heart of Wengen, so you are quick to reach restaurants and other shops. Skiing is a big part of the community, especially because it is easy to get to the gondola and then ski back down to town during lunch breaks. It is a great location for summer hiking and winter skiing.

The next morning, we headed up to First Mountain by taking the gondola, about a 10- minute walk up the hill or short bus ride. We walked around the path drilled into the side of the mountain, leaving you feeling suspended in midair. There’s a restaurant at the top that would be a perfect meeting space for drinks and lunch. Half of us tested out the First Flyer and Glider which were zipline and paragliding like activities on the mountain top. We had great views and lots of fun.

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Do remember you can find all our bios on both our blog and our website.

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Return Service Requested

## What you say...

### **CROISI EUROPE CRUISE IN FRANCE** **Shelley Sharp | Agent: Nancy Fowler**

I really enjoyed the experience. A few glitches with the taxi strike in Paris and baggage handler strike in Nantes, but we survived. The hotels were perfect in both Paris and Amsterdam. The boat (Croisi Europe) was a 5-star floating hotel. Beautiful. First class everything. Food was amazing. Had to be bussed to the castles since there weren't any along the river. One trip was a full day away from the boat. I would have preferred the boat docking at a small town and us being able to spend the day wandering the town, going to a castle, etc. The part you arranged all went smoothly. We got confused at the train station in Paris. They didn't realize our paper ticket would get us on the train, but we finally got someone at our train gate who knew that was our ticket. It was worth the money to be met by a driver when we got to Nantes and back to the airport. I did have to go to the American hospital in Paris because of an ear infection. I was directed there by our travel insurance company. There was no urgent care, but they squeezed me in and I got medicine.

*(Note: Shelley and her husband did have Travelguard insurance and made a claim and were reimbursed for their hospital visit).*

### **NEW YORK** **Julie Vigeland | Agent: Lindsay Nichols**

We are actually home from Charleston. FYI, since there is no direct flight to Charleston and we wanted to use Alaska

miles, we went via NYC. We hadn't been there in 10 years so hadn't seen the 9/11 Memorial or the High Line. It was Ted's birthday on the 13th so we got tickets for "The Book of Mormon" which he wanted to see. When we arrived, it turned out that our hotel, the Kimpton Muse thanks to Lindsay, was only a couple of blocks from the theater where "Hamilton" is playing. We couldn't get tickets for that night but did for a Sunday matinee. A thrilling experience! (And the hotel was perfect!). We also went to the newly opened Hudson Yards which is must see for the size and art. Just outside is the new "Vessel" sculpture which had opened three days before. We got our tickets and climbed it (16 stories and 80 platforms!) then checked out an exhibit in The Shed. Since Hudson Yards is at one end of the High Line, we then walked from there to the Whitney which is at the other end.

### **ATTITUDE COUNTS** **Storm Floten | Agent Nancy Fowler**

Nancy, We are still dead in the water. At least we are now anchored and not adrift threatening to run into the reefs. They are taking us off in tender bags and all and flying us from Taveuni to Nadi. Some people today, we fly tomorrow. People are mad as hell, but it's an adventure for Theresa and I. I can't thank you enough for taking care of us. Sorry to bother you at home last night. Hopefully we can go for a swim today if the back swim platform is operational. It hasn't worked the past 14 days. We haven't been in the water yet on this cruise.