

Catching the Wind with Drifter Sister

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It's Time to Make your 2013 Vacation Plans

I KNOW IT MAY SEEM EARLY, BUT YES, IT IS TIME. January will be here before we know it, and if you haven't made your plans, along comes spring and wow, where does the time go?

And then all of the good Drifter Sister *Catch the Wind Tours* are full, and you missed your chance to be swimming in a villa in Tuscany, basking in the Andalusian sunshine, or swimming in the crystal-clear azure blue waters of the Aegean Sea in Greece. Come on, you know you've been meaning to sign up and 'catch' one of these tours. Why not Just Do It. Now! Check out the 'How to Book' section of the tour you're interested in to see how easy it is.

Thanks for a GREAT 2012

First, I would like to thank all of you who Caught the Wind with Drifter Sister in 2012

The year started out with a little group braving the chilly April climes in Ireland, including the first Drifter Sister extension in Northern Ireland. We learned a lot from our wonderful guide Tim about their interesting, turbulent, and moving history, and enjoyed the beautiful scenery, including the famous Giant's Causeway. Then we headed south for the always fun and enjoyable basic tour of the Emerald Isle.



Sitting on the Giant's Boot



Peace Wall - Artists and visitors express their feelings



The Line-Up at an Ancient Cloister

Directly from Ireland, I met three



in Tuscany and another fun time was had by all on that perennial favorite.



I will never forget the experience of the guys making pizza in our very own pizza ovens at the villas.

Then, in August, 13 of us took a ride on the Rocky Mountaineer tourist train through the breathtaking and unparalleled scenic Canadian Rockies. This award-winning journey is one of the premier luxury experiences in the world. We spent four relaxing days in RM's GoldLeaf-service passenger cars.



Then, during the ground portion of the tour we were fed and pampered in two of the premier hotels in the world, Fairmont's Chateau Lake Louise, and the only 5-star hotel in Banff, the Rimrock - talk about a room with a view! Watch for this tour to return in 2014.



Our Group at Emerald Lake

France was terrific this year. A wonderful group, great weather, and of course the usual fantastic ambience of Chateau d'Agel, the 12th century castle in which we stay.



Our Castle - Chateau d'Agel



Chateau de Salses - Fortress near the Spanish border

Finally, a custom tour in Tuscany with 'the Favorite American Bad Girls' rounded out the *Catch the Wind* tour season in great style.



Enjoying the Hotel Terrace in Cinque Terre

What's in Store for 2013?

Seven tours are scheduled for 2013. You have several choices in Europe, plus New Zealand and Mexico.

New Zealand kicks off the *Catch the Wind* season in mid-February. This 3-week custom tour of the South Island, including our very own naturalist guide, will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience. It's not too late to hop on board.

May begins a marathon three tour extravaganza for Drifter Sister, starting in Tuscany, going directly to Spain, followed by a segue right into Greece & Turkey. Whew! Although I would love to have you along on all three of these fabulous small-group tours, I suspect you will probably be choosing just one. And I will be there to greet and guide you through whichever of these marvelous European adventures you do indeed decide to join.

Rounding out the season, in the Fall of 2013, will be another magical stay in the 12th Century castle, Chateau d'Agel in France, and a repeat Let's Go to Tuscany tour. To finish off the year, we'll be in Mexico, immersed in their Dia de las Muertos Festival followed by a week of pampering at my favorite spa, Ixtapan de la Sal.

I sincerely hope you will find something you like in this exciting line-up, and look forward to traveling with you in 2013.

It's All About the Food

In addition to the amazing locations and great new friendships made while on each *Catch the Wind* Tour, my thoughts as I look back this year are all about savoring the food we enjoyed along the way.



France conjures the sensual delights of the fresh-baked-

that-morning bread and pastries straight from the bakery truck that comes to our little village four times a week; huge chunks of savory cheeses; and olives freshly picked from nearby groves, prepared using this year's crop. To export them they must be pasteurized, after which a little of the flavor is lost, so you just can't get them like this at home. I always take the opportunity to indulge whenever one presents itself.



Fresh Olive Bins at the Market

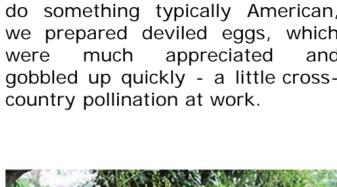
And just like at home, much of the socializing is centered around the food. One night we had a fabulous meal cooked for us 'at home,' to which we invited the owners of the chateau. We learned all about their history and that of the castle. Turns out it has been in the wife's family since 1750!



Catered Dinner at the Chateau



This year two local events were held on the castle grounds while we were there as well, both followed by a potluck, just as we would do at home, but with slightly different dishes, such as quiche (of course), and pastries. Wanting to do something typically American, we prepared deviled eggs, which were much appreciated and gobbled up quickly - a little cross-country pollination at work.



Potluck at the Chateau

More than ever before, this trip brought home to me the true meaning of *it's all about the food*, all over the world.

And then there were the two *Catch the Wind* tours to Tuscany, one in the Spring, and one in the Fall, where in both cases the food played a primary role. Tuscany offers the absolute best red wines, freshly-made pastas, and the most beautiful and tasty produce ever experienced.



Making Gnocchi by Hand



Beautiful Produce

Add to this the crusty bread, tasty cheeses (Pecorino & Asiago come to mind), and thinly sliced ham (prosciutto) ... and you have the culinary experience of a lifetime.



Taste-tempting Platter

Did You Know?

Did you know that 24-hour Travel Counseling is included on even the most basic Travel Guard insurance policy?

Whether you choose a simple medical coverage plan (less than \$100 in most cases), or medical plus trip cancellation (~5% of trip cost), you receive a concierge service called Travel Counseling, which includes:

- emergency or last-minute travel changes
- pre-trip travel advice
- emergency medical assistance in locating English-speaking medical specialists or facilities and assistance with medical evacuations anywhere in the world
- e-mail or phone message relay to family, friends, and business associates
- emergency cash transfer assistance
- assistance with replacing lost travel documents, such as tickets, passport, or visa
- assistance in locating lost or stolen baggage and personal effects; and telephone interpretation for medical or legal emergencies.

THANK YOU

Thank you for visiting. I hope you enjoyed the newsletter. Please check back often.

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