

High times avec Le Caribou dans Le Carnaval de Quebec

We were having cocktails with a French-Canadian friend in a cliffside restaurant overlooking the St. Lawrence River at Quebec City when I first ordered a Caribou.

The waiter, very properly dressed and with a white towel over his arm, looked me in the eye and said firmly, "No, Madame."

The Caribou, a local spirited concoction, is served every year at Quebec's winter carnival, Le Carnaval de Quebec. The carnival is a pre-Lenten celebration of winter that includes huge ice sculptures, dogled and snowshoe races, hockey and curling competitions, speed skating and canoe races by the St. Lawrence River.

It is a time when Quebecers drink Le Caribou by the gallon, even though it is illegal to mix more than one such drink at a time.

"Bartenders are fined if they are caught making it in quantity, because the law thinks of it as a lethal weapon," our friend said. "Of course, they do it anyway, during Le Carnaval, and they get fined."

Any adventurous soul would sample a drink like that, but only if the waiter agrees to take the order.

"I would like a Caribou," I again said to the waiter.

"Oh, no, Madame. The Caribou is not for you," he said, contorting his face for emphasis.

I insisted. He served what looked to be an innocent looking red drink. The waiter stood silently by while I sampled it. It tasted like an Hawaiian volcano mixed with a hydrogen bomb.

TRAVEL LOG of Iris Jones



"Aha!" the waiter said. "It is strong, no?"
"It is strong, yes!" I said, ordering a gin and tonic.
Described in tourist literature as reinforced red wine, it is reinforced with 100 proof alcohol.

"For some reason you can drink a lot more of it during Le Carnaval," my friend said cheerfully. "Maybe it's because it's so cold and the Caribou thaws you out, eh?"

If you are interested in eating, dancing and caribouing your way through this French-Canadian Mardi Gras festival, it will be held from Feb. 1-11 in Quebec City.

The city was founded in the 17th century by Samuel Champlain and still retains the flavor of an old European city. The centuries-old riverfront area has been restored. Cafes and guest houses and narrow streets wind up the cliffside to the old city gate, where the high-rise new city begins.

Waiters in tuxedos, with impeccable manners, serve excellent food at the tiniest down-the-lane restaurants.

The last time I was there, some of the favorite European food were Cher Guido, La Maison Voeulle, and the Cafe L'Europe.

French-Canadian cooking was served at L'Artre, A L'Ancre de la Petite Canadienne and, appropriately enough, Le Caribou.

The ice will be thick but hopefully still loose on the river during the canoe races in February. The roads will be open to the nearby ski slopes in the Laurentians, south to New England and west to Montreal.

It's a great winter vacation for people who like to say: "If we're going to have winter, we might as well enjoy it."

ARMCHAIR TRAVELERS who are frozen in place during the winter months can prepare for future travels with a variety of travel-related, non-credit courses at local campuses.

The Orchard Ridge Campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills will launch a two-phase travel and tourism course Jan. 15.

Phase One highlights travel agency operations and how these relate to airlines and other major segments of tourism. It also deals with consumer aspects of travel and the rights of the traveling public.

The course is led by Frank Samson, who has a BA in tourism from Michigan State University.

The class runs from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Mondays, Jan. 15 through Feb. 19, and costs \$25 plus a \$2 lab-field trip fee. Phase two begins Feb. 26.

GEOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHY courses for travelers highlight two Oakland University offerings starting Jan. 25. Travel and Family Photography will be held from 1-3 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 25 through March 1, at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education. It is led by photographer George Luenberger, and the fee is \$50.

Arthur D. Abbot of Troy, a training instructor for AAA, will lead Geography for Travelers at Harrison High School in Farmington Hills from 7-9 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 25 to March 1. Fee is \$55.

For information, contact the Division of Continuing Education at Oakland University in Rochester.

To the Straits of Georgia

Warming currents bring blossoms, splendor

By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

STRAITS OF GEORGIA—Two hundred years ago, Captain James Cook sailed up this inland waterway between what is now the mainland of British Columbia and the coast of Vancouver Island.

There is a smell of engine oil and the clank of machinery below deck now on the ferry, but otherwise this inland passage from Seattle to the Bering Straits

must look the same whenever sailors are out of sight of cities.

That is most of the time, because nature still rules this waterway, the same one that cruise ships ply to Alaska.

Ferries, with a swirling halo of seagulls following in every direction, daily make runs between the mainland City of Vancouver and Vancouver Island, and through the dozens of islands between.

The islands are humped green mountain rocks rising in evergreen splendor out of a cold blue sea.

Most Americans think of Canada as a frozen winter land, but this coast is warmed by the Japanese currents, so spring flowers are usually here in February or March.

In Victoria, at the southern tip of Vancouver Island, February is the month of the flower count. Residents

count the flowers in their gardens and telephone the number to the local chamber of commerce.

The goal this year is one million blooms for Feb. 8-14.

WEST COAST travelers can sample the seagull-and-evergreen experience of the inland waterway here by taking a ferry trip to the Gulf Islands, to the Vancouver Island cities of Victoria or Nanaimo or by traveling up the Sunshine Coast to Powell River.

Powell River is 80 miles north of Vancouver, as the seagulls fly. A land journey would take hundreds of miles because the coast goes a few miles north and many miles east and west along fjord-like inlets.

Overnight passenger ferries completed regular 80-mile runs for years before a complicated ferry-and-highway service replaced it. The Princess Pat, once a common sight on the Straits, now is a popular dockside restaurant in Victoria.

The new route along the Sunshine Coast leads out of Horseshoe Bay, a few miles from Vancouver, where travelers can take car or bus trips on two ferries and along two stretches of road in view of magnificent coastal scenery.

The first ferry takes tourists and coastal residents from Horseshoe Bay

Seeds to stems

The City of Victoria likes to brag about its flower count, so it will send a package of flower seeds, called the Flower Seed Postcard, to any winter-frozen reader who asks for it anywhere in the U.S. and Canada.

Write to the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, 786 Government Street, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 1W7.

to Langdale. There is the smell of seawater and a swoop of seagulls over crescented logs and pleasure boats as the ferry shudders out of the bay towards its first land fall.

Soon, only an occasional rooftop is seen through the green trees of the islands. White sails are always in view, bent between the mountain shores and the water.

On the first land leg of the trip, between Langdale and Earl's Cove, the neatly housed community of Sechart gives geometry to the coastline. Summer homes here have given way to year-round residences as land prices soared.

Although the countryside is thick and wild to the road's edge, there are motels, golf courses and other signs of tourist activity on every side near the town.

ON THE SECOND ferry, between Earl's Cove and Salsbery Bay, the water passage narrows as the ship turns between islands and moves up the mainland towards Powell River.

Powell River is a pulp and paper town, where McMillan Bloedel runs one of the biggest paper mills in the world. Tourists regularly tour the mills, but the Bloedel operation and the provincial government have recently created another combination industry-travel feature by opening the logging roads for hikers.

Here you see great Douglas firs rising over dirt roads fringed with ferns and fallen trees. This is the forest that Captain Cook's sailors walked beside the inland sea.

Travelers can explore the Sunshine Coast by contacting the British Columbia Ferry Corp. Information Center at 1045 Howe Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 2A9. Buses leave the city regularly for runs to the docking facilities at Horseshoe Bay, as well as for ferries going to other ports along the Straits of Georgia.



Passengers board the ferry at several stops for trips along the colorful Sunshine Coast. (Photo by Micky Jones)

Up the Mississippi

A steamboat race in grand style

If you like your winter vacations on water but not on ice, there are river adventures to the south where the Delta Queen and the Mississippi Queen are warming up for the Great Steamboat Race of '79.

The two paddlewheelers will hold the first overnight steamboat race in more than a century when they tackle a New Orleans to Cincinnati course May 18 to June 1.

Crew and passengers of both boats will participate in a variety of events during the race. Both of the queens will feature Hollywood-type cruises in the meantime.

The Mississippi Queen, a large paddlewheel that offers services reminiscent of a Caribbean cruise, will run Big Band Cruises starting with Coast Basie, Jan. 25-28, and ending with the Russ Morgan Orchestra, Feb. 26 to March 2.

You can take the three-day cruise downriver from New Orleans, the four day cruise upriver to Natchez, or the combined seven-day cruise. Bands change every three or four days, and include names like Ray Eberle, Lee Castle, Art Mooney, the Glen Miller Orchestra, the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, Bob Crosby, and Woody Herman.

The Delta Queen, a small wooden paddleboat built in 1925 and allowed to sail the river by special permission because of its wooden hull, features Hollywood Heyday cruises that mix old

movies with movie stars during February.

Trips to southern plantations will be mixed with films like "Gone With The Wind" and "Singing in the Rain." A Hollywood host will accompany each cruise—Pat O'Brien, Olivia deHavilland, June Allyson and Van Johnson.

These cruises leave New Orleans Feb. 2, 9, 16 and 23. Other cruises are scheduled throughout the year, and all are considerably more expensive than they were in Mark Twain's time.

The 14-day steamboat race, for example, ranges from \$1,120 to \$1,860 a person on the Delta Queen and from \$1,750 to \$2,150 a person on the Mississippi Queen. Fares include steamboat passage, accommodations, meals and entertainment.

For information, contact your travel agent or the Delta Queen Steamboat Co., 511 Main Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202.

Hotel guests can 'extra' in latest Altman film

For vacationers heading south to the sunny skies of Florida this winter, a chance to be an extra in the Robert Altman film "Health" is a possibility. The Don Cesar Resort in St. Petersburg will be the setting, as well as headquarters, for the production company during the seven-week shooting schedule. The film will star Carol Burnett, Glenda Jackson, Lauren Bacall and James Garner. Production dates are Feb. 20 to April 15.

Guests at the hotel will be asked to register for selection to participate in scenes shot in and around the hotel. The film is a comedy set in the midst of a national health foods convention.

The story was conceived by Frank Barhydt who is collaborating with Altman on the original screenplay. Said hotel manager Austin Velt: "While not all guests will be able to appear in the movie, the opportunity to observe the production process firsthand affords an exciting dimension to their vacations."

And there is always the possibility of bringing back an autograph or two for Aunt Sophie or the little ones back home.

For information, write Don Cesar Beach Resort Hotel, 3400 Gulf Boulevard, St. Petersburg Beach, Fla. 33706.

from rocking horse to rocking chair...



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